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A WOMAN FOR NOTHING

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I.

"AND the children?" asked the Bishop.

Pierre flushed. "Don't think I mean to burden you with them," he said hastily. "The nurse brings them to the city this week, and we will look about for some sort of comfortable establishment. She's a pretty good nurse."

Still Bishop West frowned a little, though plainly not at Pierre. His sister broke in impulsively,—“Why, of course,”—but he was speaking before he heard her. “I don't like it,” he said more slowly, but quite as impulsively.

Pierre reddened again. “Neither do I, Uncle Sid. I don't think anyone likes it—poor Ethel least of all. But it's no one's fault. You know what nervous prostration is. Physicians always advise a complete change, including separation from one's family.” He stated the last fact with a certain forlorn, dutiful glibness that showed he had but recently learned it.

“Well, I only know it wouldn't affect me that way,” commented Miss West. She spoke with the positiveness of a person who did not know what nervous prostration was. “The worse I feel, the more I want my own about me. Still, if, as you say, poor Ethel apparently cannot bear the sight of you or the children, I suppose her mother and the doctor are doing right to take her to Europe, and I sincerely hope it will do her good. But, of course, you and the children must come here. Where should they come, but to their own aunt and uncle? You can't mother them, I'm sure. They must miss Ethel bitterly.”

Pierre d'Invilliers turned his face away for a moment. Only two nights had passed since that first one when he had sat in the big nur-

sery chair and tried to rock to sleep two crying babies, the younger of whom had listened to no answer to her incessant catechism: "Whe' mamma? Poo' mamma we'y sick? Mamma come back?" while the elder had sobbingly asked whether it were true that mamma was as likely as not to come back in a big black box, as the "pretty good nurse" had told him. Miles of water lay already between them and the girlish figure that had lain back in the steamer chair so pathetically weak, only rousing herself to murmur, amid mechanical good-by kisses, "Oh, I wish I could stand having my children with me!"

No wish for Pierre's presence had been uttered. He scarcely expected it, and, not being of a morbid disposition, did not allow himself to feel slighted. His brain was in a whirl with all he had heard—and seen—of nervous prostration during the last four months, and he was ready to permit anything, undergo anything, which would further the restoration of his wife's health. Nevertheless, it was only human to feel wistful and set adrift.

No woman can stand tears in a man's eyes. "Go right back to the hotel, Pierre," ordered Miss West with sharp sympathy. "Have your things sent here at once, and telegraph that nurse to bring the babies to us. I will keep her if I like her looks. You must not eat another meal out of this house, away from——" Then she stopped suddenly.

"To-night," reminded the Bishop. "We don't know how he will feel about that." It was a great habit of his to speak in the third person of those who were present.

"I don't suppose you would care very much about a dinner-party, Pierre," said his aunt apologetically. "Of course, we had no idea that you were coming, and we have asked just a small, quiet party of old friends, League and Settlement workers mostly, Miss Rix and Dr. Whyte and Milly Dougall,—you've met her, I think,—but we'll understand it if you would rather stay away."

"Oh, I'll not stay away," said Pierre. "I have my dress-suit with me, fortunately. I left the servants packing most of my belongings. I like Dr. Whyte,—jolly old man, not a bit clerical, any more than you are, Uncle Sid,—and Milly Dougall was a staving pretty girl last year. Usual time—half-past seven?"

"Don't say anything," counselled the Bishop, the moment afterwards, when his nephew was already out of the house. "There's no reason why you should. His wife is not dead, nor, I firmly believe, likely to die, and the boy has been in a sick-room atmosphere, debarred from society, for months."

"I don't understand it," said his sister unheedingly, "any more than I do nervous prostration. And you know very well you don't understand it. Such—such—springiness! He had been crying an instant before."

"Perhaps it is because we are not young that we do not understand it," said the Bishop with a faint smile. "Or you can say it is the French in him"—an allusion to Miss West's unfailing explanation of all idiosyncrasies on the part of those she had always called "Martin d'Invilliers's children" when they displeased her.

"I was going to," said Miss West with much simplicity.

II.

DR. WHYTE, the progressive rector of the new shining white church in the new glittering green-and-white suburb into which the Wests had recently moved, would have been as openly pleased as the Bishop was secretly annoyed to hear Pierre d'Invilliers declare him "not clerical." Born into the mediæval Church, he would have founded a new order, led a new Crusade. Reared in a more flexible religious organization than one which in a stinging unforgiven Convention sermon he had reminded his brethren was "partly Christian," he would have become an evangelist of world-girdling power, scarce stopping in his haste and earnestness for ordination. Finding himself in a fold where these outlets were closed, he occupied himself with widening what doors it had, stripping them of some ornamentation in order to do so, recklessly adding to the gorgeous shaded lights which hung above it any handy, homely rush candle or Jack-o'-lantern which might and did serve to show stumbling feet the way. He electrified people in every sense of the word—awakening and imparting new vitality to some, and sending off others shocked and tingling with discomfort, thoroughly resolved to keep away from him in future. He loved dinner-parties and other festivities, thereby furnishing a handle to those of his detractors who did not call him an absurd ascetic; it was rumored, but never proved, that on the night before his ordination he had led the charity German in one of the most fashionable halls of his native city; at all events, he frankly enjoyed talking to a pretty girl, and was sorry when his hostess interrupted a conversation with Milly Dougall, from which Pierre d'Invilliers was beginning to feel a little excluded.

"The French Consul is to take you out, Milly," she said, gliding up to the little group with that calm, unhurried directness of movement which gives to some large women so much grace. "You, Doctor, fall to me, I believe. And, Pierre," a little aside, "I'm so sorry, but you will have to take out Miss Rix. I could not work it around any other way. Do you mind very much? You can get on with anyone."

"Mind? Charmed, I'm sure," said Pierre politely, but a little nonplussed, while his aunt touched Milly's wrist caressingly—she was very fond of the girl—and murmured, in an even lower aside, "I did the best I could for you. His Consulship is not so handsome as Pierre,

nor so interesting as the Doctor, but he is the only unmarried man in the room, save the Bishop."

"Why, I never insist on that," whispered back the girl, her eyes dancing.

"Naughty child!" laughed Miss West, moving away. She had the easy innocence which in more sophisticated souls we call charity. Then Pierre turned to the others and asked, "Who is Miss Rix?" He had very nearly asked instead, "What is the matter with her?"

"A friend of your aunt's. Very active in church work," answered Dr. Whyte's wife carefully. Pierre felt dampened.

"The hatefulest of hateful philanthropists," supplemented Milly Dougall, not so softly but what it was heard by Bishop West, who corrected, almost with sternness: "A sterling woman. You surely must have met her here, Pierre."

"Worse and worse," groaned Pierre to Miss Dougall. "Sterling philanthropists are bad enough, but a woman I've met and can't remember must be a nonentity indeed. I seem to recognize the name."

"Of course you recognize the name. You have certainly heard of old Abram Rix."

"His daughter? Oh, of course. Only died a year or two ago, didn't he? He so dropped out of sight, after he failed, that I had half forgotten the golden shadow the name of Rix once cast."

Miss Dougall made a little grimace. "You can call it failing if you like. He was shorn of a few superfluous millions, and no doubt it was not known until he died how much was really saved from the wreck, he was always so close-fisted. But I wouldn't mind having Miss Rix's income, though, to deal myself justice, I doubt if I'd do so much good with it."

"You do enough good without it," Pierre had just time enough to say before the French Consul came and bore her away from him to a place at the table where he could not see her, save by craning his neck rudely across the face of the woman in an ugly purple gown whom his aunt had in a hurried and conscience-smitten manner introduced to him as Miss Rix.

Pierre was never rude. Older women's hearts usually opened like roses under his smile, as sunny for them as for girls in their teens, and his manner, in which deference was so happily mingled with that gay boyish banter which made them feel his contemporaries. Pierre was rather proud of this manner, which, nevertheless, "came natural" to him, as fond parents of prodigies assert of their offsprings' talents, but Miss Rix seemed scarcely to know that it was there. Her monosyllables, gruff as a man's,—“and a dyspeptic man's at that,” thought Pierre sorely,—were as unpropitious to friendly conversation as the faux pas into which he himself stumbled at the outset.

"Isn't Mrs. Whyte a pretty woman?" he asked genially.—"For her age, I mean," he conscientiously added, as youth will do, and then was furious at himself. He did not dare a second glance at his companion's face, but his first had unerringly shown him that she could not be far from forty. He stole a look at the hair gripped back in a lumpy coiffure which seemed at once too tight and too loose. It was dark and abundant, without a thread; but there was the gray of life in the face she turned just then, merely saying, "Yes," quite indifferently, after all.

"Is the French Consul pleasant?" he continued, bound to conquer her monosyllables.

"The man Milly Dougall is flirting with?" contemptuously.

It was undoubtedly true. Pensive-eyed, with parted, murmuring lips, that young person was hanging on the words of the suave, dark-skinned man beside her as though they gave her the bread of life. It was exactly her manner towards him a half-hour ago. It would be her manner towards someone else half an hour later—the Bishop himself, probably—and why not? Thank Heaven, all good people were not so spitefully moral—Uncle Sid and Aunt Emma, for instance.

His glance strayed admiringly to his uncle, who to him, and to many others besides him, represented an ideal for once fulfilled. Bishop West was the youngest—some judges added, the ablest—bishop east of the Mississippi; his hair was as unthreaded as Miss Rix's own, only it was all pure white,—that fine, glistening, spun-silver hair, almost like a baby's, that gives the impression of youth renewed rather than departed. Dr. Whyte said he wore his halo in advance; a bolder spirit—if there were a bolder than Dr. Whyte—might have quoted from some dimly remembered Old-Testament vision of one with face transfigured and hair white as wool. There are people whose serenity rasps; in Bishop West it soothed, nearly lulled, until the unwary, almost unconsciously presuming on what appeared unearthly simplicity and goodness, wakened up with a start to the fact that they were dealing with a man of noiseless force, and realized anew the aptness of the old figure of the velvet-scabbarded sword. He could run anything without friction, including an interdenominational mission campaign. Even women who did not like her admitted that Milly Dougall said a bright thing when she observed that Dr. West must have been a bishop when he was three days old.

His nephew looked at him with greater and greater admiration as his voice, soft, refined, yet resonant as an organ, instantly occupied a break in the table talk with an anecdote crackling with a dry humor which set even the solemn-faced French Consul smiling. "If Uncle Sid were only six inches taller!" he said regretfully to his neighbor. "Add that on, give him a sword and corselet,—his hair is helmet

enough,—and he would be a perfect incarnation of King Arthur. Though Launcelot always seemed to me to have more of the stuff of life in him."

Miss Rix merely looked at him disagreeably in reply.

"Don't you think he only needs the height?" pursued Pierre, who was himself close on six feet.

"He does very well as he is," said Miss Rix coldly.

These philanthropists!—Great Cæsar, that was it! They don't want to hear other people praised, or even blamed; the right course is to start them on their own hobby, and then they can talk fast enough. "I wish you would tell me about your work among—your people," he added, self-savingly, not wishing to particularize until he found whether it were the poor or the insane, the criminal or the heathen, upon whom she lavished what tender mercies might be concealed about her angular person. "I'm so interested in that sort of thing. I really am." And it was true. It was the French in him.

"I never talk about it," said Miss Rix more brusquely than ever. "It bores me, if it does not bore others. And a dinner-party is no place to talk sociology."

"Sociology, did I hear you say?" called Milly Dougall gayly across the table. "Oh, that's just the subject Dr. Whyte and I have been talking about." For she had already exhausted the Consul and turned to her next-hand neighbor. "You know so much about the poor, Miss Rix: you can settle the question." Dr. Whyte swiftly hid his lips with an unfilled wineglass. "What do you think makes and keeps them so poor?"

Half anxious, half complacent, and wholly pretty, she interlaced her small, bediamonded fingers and waited to be upheld in one or the other of the theories so consoling to the rich. Everyone else stared a little, but Miss Rix stared a great deal.

"I beg your pardon?" she repeated.

"Why—is it drink, do you believe, or is it thriftlessness? or perhaps the tariff or free trade, whichever it is we are having. The papers mix you up so, you can't tell. What is it keeps them so poor?"

Miss Rix, even gentle Emma West admitted afterwards, looked at the girl as though she were crazy. Then, "The low wages they get," she said shortly, and again Dr. Whyte drank invisible cordials.

"Oh, but they are thriftless," said Milly stoutly. "And unfeeling, even towards their children. I know! My mother visited a family of ten Irish children once, and because she said the youngest dirty thing was pretty, did not the mother instantly offer to part with it for ten dollars, or 'Nothing, lady, if you'll only rare it?'"

"And would have come and kidnapped it within six months, if taken at her word," said Bishop West, smiling. "I too know these

people. It strikes me as pathetic rather than heartless, the way in which they will part with the one hope which feeds their starved lives for the sake of the children's welfare—a sort of sublimation of mother-love, don't you know?"

Miss Rix said nothing, only searchingly eyed the last speaker. Pierre too was silent. Before he knew it a sigh had escaped him, evident enough to be noticed by his neighbor, who said sharply, "You think him a hopeless sentimentalist, don't you?"

"I was not thinking of that," said the young man wearily. "I am a hopeless sentimentalist myself, for that matter. I was only thinking of my own two babies in New York, and wondering whether they were asleep or crying."

"Where is your wife?" demanded Miss Rix.

"She left for Europe yesterday. She is completely broken down in health, too nervous to stand the children at all."

"Ah, yes, that is the modern situation, I believe." And Miss Rix suddenly and completely devoted herself to the dessert.

Pierre had never met anyone quite like this woman, whose rudeness very nearly fascinated him. Quick, real tears had welled up into Milly Dougall's soft eyes when, with more of detail and self-revelation, he had described a state of affairs which he knew very well was equally pathetic for all parties concerned. She was a woman. The other was a prickly pear, and he was glad when the rising signal gave him opportunity to leave her.

"Sterling articles are commonly heavy, are they not?" asked Milly demurely when he rejoined her. "They can cut, though, when properly sharpened. The French Consul was heavy and dull, both."

"Did she hurt your feelings?" asked Pierre indignantly.

"She? Miss Needles?" The girl laughed. "Why, she does worse than that every time we meet. I think she imagines she is one of the bears divinely commissioned to eat up flippant little children. She's a good woman, though," Milly added consistently, "and I'm really sorry for her, and make allowances for her. She's wretchedly unhappy, with all her money."

"And all her philanthropy?"

"Do happy people philanthropy?" asked Milly concisely. "No, now her father is not living to tyrannize over her, poor Miss Rix's occupation is gone. I believe she is thinking of being a deaconess, or a sister, or founding another College Settlement, or something. She says herself she is too sarcastic to be a missionary. You see old Mr. Rix was a horrid philanthropist too, and he bound her down very young to church work and pottering among the poor, never letting her go much into society for fear she would marry some fortune-hunter, and the result of it is she has not married anybody, and so things in general

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have soured her. With all her money she could marry even now, but she would have to go to Europe for the man."

"Let's take up a popular subscription and send her to Europe," proposed Pierre, and then they both laughed irreverently, without fear of she-bears.

"I think Pierre is susceptible," said Miss West, smiling, when Pierre had gone to see Miss Dougall to her carriage. She spoke as much to Miss Rix, who stood in the hall wrapped up for departure, as to her brother. "We don't want to introduce too many charming girls."

"You and Miss Rix must interest him in charitable work," proposed the Bishop. "The boy will feel lonely, and he really likes that sort of thing. He played the violin through a whole winter of working-men's entertainments in New York."

"I suppose he is fond of the violin," said Miss Rix dryly. But when Pierre returned, she looked more intently at his sparkling face; which radiated content with himself and the world.

"Now I must see Miss Rix to her carriage also," he insisted, with the best air in the world.

"No, no!" commanded Miss Rix almost angrily, but quite in vain.

III.

"LET me print my name at the bottom, anyhow," plead Danny.

"My dear boy," said his father, reaching out a sudden arm for a remorseful, woman-like hug, "you can print the whole letter some day when your papa is not in a hurry to catch the foreign mail. But now you must go a little faster. Aunt Emma took you to ride on the flying horses, and you had ice-cream afterwards, and were very cold—anything else?"

"Mamma come back?" wistfully interjected Bertha, who felt herself a little left out of this literary collaboration. Pierre hugged her too, and said patiently, "Soon, my baby," and to Danny, "Well?"

"That's all—oh, no! Yesterday we went to some lady's house, and had a lovely time, playing with her dolls she had when she was a little girl—no, don't tell mamma that, because I'm a boy, but she worked Punch and Judy for us, and told Aunt Emma to bring us again, and we had a regular corker of a time, didn't we, Bertha?"

"Went yady house," repeated Bertha happily. "P'ay Pushudy."

"Why, I did not hear of this. Who was the lady?"

"I don't know!" in surprise at a question so irrelevant. "But her house has lion steps." He took the pencil from his father's fingers and began with infinite leisure to print his name in letters whose dissimilarity suggested a printer's style-card.

"Oh, here they are," bubbled a voice from the door-way. "The little loves! Oh, we were not told you were here, Mr. d'Inwilliers!"

"Are we interrupting you?" asked the other caller coldly.

They really were, but Pierre would have missed many mails before he would admit it. He watched Milly go into pretty raptures over the children, coaxing reluctant kisses from them, telling Bertha she was a beautiful bisque dolly, and for the first time his father's instinct suggested a little affectation in her sweetness. He could not think the same of Miss Rix, who merely nodded to Bertha and said stiffly to Danny, "How do you do?" which did not keep him from promptly coming and standing beside her in the solemn, sentry-like fashion which from children is a marked attention.

"You want to post that letter, I know," said Milly vivaciously. "Don't let us hinder you. I am just going, anyhow."

"What do you hear from your wife?" interrupted Miss Rix sternly, almost warningly. Bertha was trying to climb into her lap, unnoticed. Nothing so fascinates a child as indifference. Her father stopped to swing her up on the slippery, crackling silk surface before answering: "She seems about the same. It is too soon to look for improvement. You will excuse me if I post this?"

"Then I will repeat the message I left with Emma," said Miss Rix in reply. "She says you play the violin. Will you help amuse my people down at the Settlement on Friday night? We give them a monthly entertainment."

"Delighted! I must have an accompanist, though. Miss Dougall——" he paused.

"Certainly," said Milly brightly. "Come to our house and we will go over a few pieces. Oh, baby, you will certainly kiss me good-by!"

But Bertha flattened her nose against Miss Rix's resistant silk breastplate and shook her head.

"Want to come with us, Danny?" asked his father.

The little fellow was fingering the curious chatelaine of Miss Rix's watch. "Some other time," he said carelessly, without looking around.

It was a perfect feminine triumph, to which no woman since the Creation could be wholly irresponsive, and which was the more complete because unsought. Miss Rix's lips relaxed a little before they settled into more contemptuous lines as her eyes followed the two others. "I believe Milly Dougall would flirt with a blind Pope," she thought at the moment Pierre was confidentially inquiring,—

"Have I lost my judgment in the matter of gowns, or was that something very peculiar in which Miss Rix was clothed?"

"It always is," replied Milly. "She is one of the people who are never clothed; they are only covered."

The instant the closing of the front door sounded, Miss Rix slipped her arms suddenly about the baby and gathered her up to herself so

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tightly that the stiff silk scratched the apple-blossom cheek, and the child squealed, though not very loud or protestingly.

"You little lamb!" she murmured, her lips hungrily returning again and again to that exquisitely tender place on a baby's temple where the thistle-down hair first begins, like a soft golden bloom.

"Are the Punch and Judy gone away?" inquired Danny anxiously, climbing up and balancing himself on one of her knees in a way which must have made her very uncomfortable.

"No, indeed. They live there. So do spice-cakes, with big fat raisins in the middle. Next time you come you shall go down in the kitchen and put in the raisins for the cook. You dig a hole with your thumb—so." She made it in the soft cheek of the baby, who only laughed, and imitated the action on Miss Rix's face, leaving a red spot.

"Know any stories?" inquired Danny, changing his base of operations to the other knee. "Margaret doesn't know any but bogey ones. Aunt Emma won't let her tell them, but they're better than nothing."

"I know a thousand and one stories," said the lady. "My name is Scheherazade. Pronounce it, and I'll teach you to say 'The Walrus and the Carpenter.'"

While he was repeating it after her, Bertha's soft little fingers were slipping in and out of hers—not in caresses, which a healthy baby never voluntarily deals in, but to examine the heavy, costly rings which flashed so enticingly. Miss Rix stammered—faltered—almost wished the other child away, that she might lay back her head and shut her eyes under the fascination that thrilled her in the sweet, aimless touch. Suddenly she stopped altogether, as, the small fingers relaxing, the baby cuddled back in the hollow of her arm with the deep, contented sigh of sleep. "God!" she said sharply—commandingly rather than imploringly, clasping her hands with a tense movement that jarred Bertha into waking. Her eyes were almost fierce.

"God!"—obediently and unwonderingly repeated the boy. Miss Rix smiled.

"Let's whisper it," she said, "so Bertha can sleep. Shall I tell you about Mary Marea Maria Sophia Salatady Cockady Ford? Whisper after me, very softly:

"In the calico dulness of Indian Summer,
When water the road cover-o-ered,
Sat Mary Marea Maria Sophia
Salatady Cockady Ford.

"I will fish up the horse's old tracks with my shoestring
And lay 'em all out on a board,'
Said Mary Marea Maria Sophia——"

"Ma'y Mea," observed Bertha, opening her eyes. Miss Rix kissed her passionately, then went on, with eyes that glowed and cheeks where

the red spot still showed, dictating in whispers to Danny, who hugely enjoyed the novelty.

But it was on Bertha that her eyes were fixed devouringly, as the baby sank more and more heavily against her rapidly beating heart. Every time she stirred Miss Rix trembled, half with pleasure at the warm human contact of the nestling body, half with dread of her waking and slipping down and away, as other people's children always do. But she went on playing with the six-year-old, laughing in whispers and romping in dumb show. Pierre, returning from his letter-posting, stopped amazed on the stairs opposite the threshold of the study. Coming to reclaim his children, he had not looked to find them in the lap of Miss Rix. He stole on softly upstairs without disturbing them, then stopped once more and glanced down on the landing at the merry pantomime.

"Good Heavens!" he told himself, "the woman's handsome!"

Then he realized that she had been so all the time.

When the Bishop entered the study—the nurse in his train, to take the children away—he said nothing tiresome. He had known Miss Rix since her girlhood, and was much better aware of her love for children than of her reputation for sarcasm. There are people who always say the best of everyone. There are others, more spiritually fine-fingered, who only touch with the best of everyone.

"You want to write here," said Miss Rix in her staccato style. "I'm going at once. Emma had some callers who talked like fools, so I came upstairs."

"You don't mean to say you have not a case to tell me about?" he asked. "If so, it is the first time."

"You know I don't call them cases," said Miss Rix, almost as gently as to Danny. "Nor you either, nor anyone but the case-hardened. They are souls, though usually small ones. I might consult you about myself, I suppose."

The Bishop turned in the swivel chair by his desk, out of which the nurse had rudely tumbled Danny. He had a way of laying his large white hand on the slide-leaf over the row of drawers and meditatively stroking it. "You don't mean you are still thinking of Africa?" he demanded, stroking time to the words.

"Well, why not?"

"There is plenty of missionary need here at your doors," said the Bishop gravely.

"You mean I am not young enough. This world is only for the young, is it not? But I must do something different, Bishop West," almost piteously. "My present path is a good path, but—I have walked in it for almost forty years."

"It does not seem that long," said Sidney West incredulously.

"Twenty years since that house-party at the Fords, where you and I and Emma first met—do you remember it? Though they are both gone now, to be sure." He never added "Poor things!" after such remarks.

"I am likely to remember. It was the only time father ever let me leave home to be with other young people.—But you can't distract me from my subject. I wish you approved of Africa. That house is so lonely now! I think I should feel less solitary in the Soudan, and I would not know enough of the converts' language to be sarcastic in it."

"St. Paul was a very clever man," observed Bishop West thoughtfully.

Miss Rix stared. "So we are supposed to suppose," she said. "For one thing, he was able to suffer fools gladly. I would more gladly see the fools suffer."

"Whyte has preached some eloquent sermons," continued the Bishop, "to persuade us that when he spoke of being 'weary in well-doing' he meant merely a healthy fatigue. But I doubt it. There is a sickness of the soul, a disgust and contempt for the whole profitless-seeming business, which attacks each of us——"

"Oh!" she cried. "Do you know it?"

"My child," said the Bishop, over the forgotten twenty years, "every man knows it of the work he has done for a long time. St. Paul knew it. I have heard of it from bankers and bricklayers, artists and apple-women. It creeps into the service of God. Perhaps it comes even to wives and mothers, and that may be the explanation of poor Eth——" He stopped. "What I should like to see you do," he said in another tone, "if my counsel as a priest, my wish as a friend, have any weight——"

"They have every weight," interrupted Miss Rix.

"Well, then, just stop. Not short—you could not do that—but gradually, dropping old interests, taking up no new ones, until the tenseness is relaxed. And something may come from nearer than Africa to take you out of your groove." His hand suddenly stopped brushing away discouragements and difficulties, as it always appeared to do, from the desk-leaf, and he added hesitatingly: "Stay here, and help us take care of Pierre's babies—and Pierre. You do not like him, but he is a nice boy."

"I do not dislike him," said Miss Rix. "I only had not particularly noticed him." She rose. "I think," she said falteringly, "that you have been the kindest——"

The maid interrupted her, appearing at the door with cards for the Bishop, who left abruptly, glad, like any other man, to escape thanks. Miss Rix gazed after him with an added glow in her eyes. "The gentlest," she said, not aloud; "the sweetest, sanest, wisest——"

Very lingeringly, with a certain wistful mingling of restraint and passion which somehow inarticulately proclaimed it was not for the first time, she bent, and lovingly laid, first the cheek with the red spot, then the pale one, on the leaf where his hand had rested. Then she kissed the cold, polished wood. Then one of those nervous movements made by terrified eavesdroppers caught her ear and eye, and she perceived Pierre d'In villiers on the stairway opposite, every other emotion which the next second was to bring him submerged in an overwhelming astonishment. This woman? that kiss?—on cold wood too, the pity of it! and—Uncle Sid? He could not speak; he could only stare, like the rudest, least reverent of raw school-boys.

It was too dreadful a moment for the woman to start, tremble, cry. "Well?" she said sharply.

Pierre could not answer.

"Yes, I love him," she said. "I have loved him for years, if you want to know. I don't suppose you do. Oh, you need not say you did not mean to see and hear; I believe you. I don't suppose—since you are of his blood—I need ask you not to spread the fact."

"Miss Rix!"

"You are young," said Miss Rix intolerantly, growing more fierce with each red wave of shame. "You can't understand these things, if you are married. I suppose you despise me for loving a man whose like there never was upon the earth—a prince, a saint, a knight of the Holy Grail." Her eyes were wells of fire by now. "You don't know that if I have taken an interest in you, it was only for his sake."

"Despise you!" cried Pierre earnestly, while through his undermind the current of bewildered thought was running: "Oh, she calls it taking an interest, does she?" With an impulsive step forward,— "This will show you how I feel," he said, and raised the hem of her gown to his lips. He felt like a knight himself. The thought that the pathetic, amazing secret of this seeming-embittered heart was at his mercy filled him with a flame of loyalty. Only—Uncle Sid, of all men,—or bishops! "He—he ought to know," he said stammeringly.

"Will you tell him?" inquired Miss Rix cuttingly. Yet Pierre began to realize why the few who knew her well felt her sharpness so little. He suddenly felt himself one of those few.

"He does not care now," said Miss Rix in a clear, dry, impersonal voice. "There was a while, when we were young, that he—oh, just came, that was all, and seemed to like me, but father discouraged him, as he did everyone who had not as much money as he. You men are so easily discouraged!"

"Not all of us!" said Pierre with some scorn.

"And I was young and patient," she went on, "and had never thought much about things. I thought it would come. Talk of the

impatience of youth! Why, it waits and dreams forever, while everything slips through its fingers." She clenched hers at the thought.

"Oh, let me leave you," plead Pierre. "You are telling me things that tear your heart, things that you will hate me for knowing, and I should truly like to be your friend." Dreams of himself as a *Deus ex machina* in her affairs flashed for a moment through his mind and filled him with ardent plans. "And if I could ever do anything for you——"

"You can," said Miss Rix haughtily. "Don't pity me."

"She thinks me a boy," meditated Pierre when he was alone. So many cares had gathered on his brow of late that the idea filled him with amusement rather than resentment—a sure indication of her mistake. "She only takes an interest in me for Uncle Sid's sake." That, now, rankled somewhat. For an instant he idly wondered how possible it might be to make her take an interest in him for himself. The idea faded, however, before the vision which had so deeply impressed his sympathetic nature—that of this woman, so tall, so stern, so hard and ungracious of exterior, laying a world of unsatisfied longing and passionate devotion in a kiss on a surface of cold wood where a man's hand had carelessly rested. The greatest pity seemed that it should be such a man as Uncle Sid—nicest chap that ever was, of course, but—so absurdly old, even for Miss Rix! who had not looked old at all for that five minutes. On second thought, he scarcely felt like pursuing that plan of bringing the two together. Let her lavish all that hidden richness of affection on someone with keener eyes to discern it. Pierre could not understand any man's not understanding women. It came so natural to him. Though he had not understood, and did not yet wholly understand, Miss Rix.

"Kissing cold wood!" again he murmured that night. He could not get rid of the picture. "I wonder if Ethel, or any other woman, ever thought that much of me?"

He felt vaguely lonely until he went in to kiss the warm cheeks of his sleeping children.

IV.

"You play the violin very well," said Miss Rix to him abruptly as they waited for his accompanist in the little parlor opposite the Social Settlement's auditorium. This was not the first time he had played here for the weary working-folk, who liked himself and his repertoire, which they saw was not selected with a view to their limitations, but comprised just such "pieces" as he would play for his wealthy friends. Miss Dougall had accompanied him the first time; when on the second occasion she was unable to come, Miss Rix provided a sage, quiet, pale girl, for whose musical education she was paying, and felt, like Saul, that she was doing God service. But to-night the girl was late, and came hurrying in at the last moment with timid apologies. "What did

you bring to-night?" she asked, unrolling her own music. "I just snatched up what was on top of the rack."

"That's a pity," said Pierre gayly. "I wanted to outdo myself. Miss Rix has just told me I played very well." He was really elated to receive praise from one so chary in bestowing it.

"It's all Polish stuff," said Miss Bruce, running over the leaves. "The 'Varsovienne'—you did not bring that? well, we both have the 'Kuiawiak,' and that always pleases."

"Don't play the 'Kuiawiak,'" said Miss Rix restlessly. The young people looked at her in surprise. "It—it somehow makes me remember I am nearly forty," she said, with a half-embarrassed laugh.

"Are you really nine years older than I?" asked Pierre, who could do things without being impertinent. Miss Bruce had gone in to open up the piano.

"Nine!" echoed the woman. "Are you more than twenty-five?"

"Five years more than twenty-five," said Pierre, smiling. "Will you respect me more for it? If so, I will tell you that I recently found a gray hair——"

"They are clapping for you," cut in Miss Rix with even more than her normal abruptness. "Don't be more dilatory than Miss Bruce; she's bad enough."

What had happened to make her feel exasperated against the girl she could not tell, for she was usually no martinet over mere punctuality. And Miss Bruce was looking rather pretty, more animation than common showing in her subdued features, more blood rising to her porcelain cheeks; and she was undoubtedly very grateful and amiable and desirous to please, her eyes anxiously following each movement of Pierre's bow—indeed, each changing expression of his face, each flicker of an eyelid, as though it were necessary to study and interpret these too. Yet her patroness found herself frowning almost malevolently at the girl when her own reflection—for an instant stared at unrecognizingly, as is usual when a looking-glass takes us by surprise—confronted her unexpectedly in the high cornice mirror, a gift of her own, over the entrance opposite the stage, where she sat with the other directors and participants of the concert.

Miss Rix bit her lip to banish the frown, which she knew made her look very ugly, when she knew she was not. Not ugly, only forty—in one more year, a woman of forty!

One's age is among the vast number of things known without realization. She was not aware that she was hearing the "Kuiawiak" played with infinite expression—the most divinely despairing, the most insidiously saddening, the most poignantly beautiful of all wild Polish melodies ever fitted to the wistful violin; a melody which is all fingers, grasping at every nerve of the body, plucking out the soul and holding

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it up to the owner's gaze, striking it now with exquisite sorrow, waking it next into supreme exhilarating revolt against something or everything, and finally replacing the torn soul with a last gentle touch of healing and passing its mesmeric fingers over the quivering nerves with a soft, soothing farewell as it lingeringly ends.

Nevertheless, the swift, glistening bow of the boy, the white, rapid fingers of the girl, were playing on the keys of her being as music had never played before, susceptible as she was to its influence. An absolutely freezing horror had taken possession of her, startling her for the first time out of that dogged waiting attitude which loses everything by its patience, with the reminder, brutal as a blow, that her youth was past instead of to come; that she was never to taste of the common cup of womanhood, even to find it bitter; that she would be as a thing pushed aside, a vessel stranded, a failure in the eyes of shallow men,—a woman for nothing!

She could have shrieked aloud.

The "Kuiawiak" had stopped, and other numbers on the interminable-seeming programme succeeded, note after note drumming in on her heart words like these:

"Youth, youth, youth!
Gone, gone, gone!
Tricked, tricked, tricked!
Lone, lone, lone!"

She stared grimly into the mirrored face, too evident to her over the reflected rows of others, trying to stare youth into it. Impossible; the lines were hard set, the hope and the wistfulness and the outlook gone—and, by Fate's consummate sarcasm, left in her heart! Oh, the mismanagement of it!

She had always regarded the woman of forty as born, not made, least of all as having forty thrust upon her. She thought of those of her sex she knew as "middle-aged" and "elderly"—women sunken-eyed, full of vertical wrinkles, with smooth, streaked, plastery hair—petty, complacent, chastened,—all juice of youth and graciousness dried in them—the idea filled her with a madness of revolt. "Shall I be like that, and nothing to show for it?"—"a barren stock," like sad Elizabeth—oh, what had she ever done to deserve it, save sacrifice herself to duty? She sucked eagerly at the poison of self-pity.

When Bishop West stopped in at the close of the concert, fresh from a missionary meeting, to make a few friendly remarks such as she usually loved to hear from him, she gazed at him with hard eyes of momentary indifference, almost dislike. "For this man I have thrown myself away," she thought. How many ways there were for a woman to do that! and she had been taught that there was only one. She had

learned through her friends' unhappy marriages that there were two, and was now finding that there were three. Her bitterness uprose and overflowed even him whom she had set on a pinnacle of love above it. For the first time she realized the force of the King Arthur comparison. He was cold and remote, with all his goodness, and—not young; and she restlessly craved youth.

Yet how kind he was! He offered to escort her home,—she never brought her carriage among these humble friends,—but Pierre interposed.

"Miss Rix has a lot of names at home of Sunday-school boys for me to take skating," he said. "Let me go with her."

"It is Miss Rix's to choose," said his uncle, smiling serenely.

Had he not smiled! had he cared, as other men do about other women! An unjustifiable anger burned red in Miss Rix's cheeks, and almost without a reply she took Pierre's arm. In this one poor instance, in this paltry triumph where everyone was indifferent, she would not be a woman for nothing.

In the street she turned abruptly to Pierre: "You will have to get another accompanist."

"Miss Dougall, you mean?"

"If you like; or anyone. I am going to send Miss Bruce to Germany to complete her musical education. She does not know it, but I have always intended sending her if she deserved it, and now she has done so." She did not specify in what way.

"You are awfully good," said Pierre boyishly. They had left squalid streets where she was safer and more respected than the Chief of Police himself, and were now in the block of implacable-looking houses of gray and brown stone, frowning the frown of purse-pride on passers-by, where her own dwelling was situated. A drunken club-man came struggling by, careening forlornly in the effort to read the numbers, and for a moment Miss Rix was pulled out of the way by a protecting arm, promptly removed and punctiliously apologized for. No man's arm had ever been round her before. Nor would be again.

"You are not going to make me have Miss Dougall for an accompanist, are you?" asked Pierre, when she had given him the list of boys' names and expected him to go. "Because she is beginning to bore me.—Oh, Miss Rix! might I say something?"

"If it's about my gown, no," said that lady, flushing a little as she traced his eyes to it. "What you said about that purple one the other day was quite impertinent enough. No one ever spoke to me so before."

"This is still more impertinent," proceeded the Bishop's nephew, cheerfully acting on her prohibition. "It is that I never saw you look so well in anything as you do in this. That lace arrangement is simply great. The purple was so awful! You didn't mind, did you?"

"The fact that it stung me into this proves that I minded," said Miss Rix, wondering, but not regretting, that he did not go. A strange thought held her for an instant. Could she—cautiously, of course, and experimentally, without wounding much of his feelings or her self-respect—discover if it still lay in her to attract a man,—any success she might have going to salve that pathetic credulous vanity so cruelly necessary to human existence,—before she went hence into forty and was no more seen? She rejected the thought with indignation, and wished Pierre would go, instead of twirling himself on the piano-stool.

"Why cannot you accompany me?" he asked suddenly. "You are always there at the concerts anyhow. Let's try this sonata on the rack; it is one of my pieces."

"Nonsense!" said Miss Rix. "I have scarcely done anything at my music since I was a girl."

"Don't talk as if that were so long ago," said the young man merrily; "especially while you wear that gown." His eyes sparkled as he spoke. Many women had donned many gowns for him, but he had not expected a chance daring word to weigh with this one—or that more artistic dressing would make her look so much better. There was something really statuesque, Rosettian, in her pose as she leaned one elbow on the piano.

"I think," he said impulsively, "you really might let me come in and practise a few things with you, even if you will not be my accompanist. This is a big, lonely town of evenings, when the babies are put to bed and Uncle Sid is presiding over church congresses, and Aunt Emma—oh, a dear! but one couldn't spend eternity with an aunt."

"But you make friends so readily."

"No, I don't," said Pierre quickly. "Liking most people, and being conceited enough to think that they don't mind me, isn't the same as making real friends—people who don't wear thin as soon as the gloss is off, people who give you something to bite on, who have lived and can understand things, instead of just opening big, opaque eyes when you talk, like Miss Dougall and even——" He broke off. "Oh, I want friendship fast enough, if I can get it."

Miss Rix put out a hand heavy with diamonds. It was the impulse of a moment, which she afterwards impatiently regretted as hasty and emotional. "I have neither lived, nor do I understand many things," she said a little bitterly. "But I am willing to be your friend, though what I have to give you, Heaven only knows."

Late that night, lying awake, with her heart stinging with an unwonted excitement, her ears ringing with snatches of music, her mind occupied with confused memories of conversation which showed the mettle of a man under the insouciance of boyhood, like service-stained armor glinting through a gay silk robe, she conscientiously asked her-

self if there had been anything unseemly in the music and gayety at that prolonged hour of the night; anything in such innocent friendly social intercourse with that labelled explosive, a married man, which the sharpest censor—herself, for instance—could condemn? The inward monitor made no answer, leaving it to her own decision in the shirking way of consciences, and she said aloud, with a laugh half embarrassed, half indignant, "Certainly not!"

She pressed an unusually flushed cheek into the placid, uncontroversial pillow, raising it again to add reproachfully, "And if it were, it has been so long since any man made me feel I was a woman!"

V.

"It is so kind of you to take them," said Bishop West cordially. One hand absently felt about for a desk to smooth and stroke in his habitual manner. As he was seated in the sunny, luxurious little sitting-room—half-nursery since the advent of the d'In villiers children—instead of his study, he did not find it, so for a substitute rubbed one finger affectionately up and down Bertha's cheek.

"Nonsense!" said Miss Rix almost irritably. Swift reproach for her own unwonted sharpness towards him changed to swift resentment that it passed unnoticed. "You know they give me pleasure," she said. "Why is it kind for me to take them out now and then?" She straightened Danny's tie deftly, and he smiled gratefully. "That's a pretty dress you have on," he said affably, by way of return.

"P'i'y dess," echoed Bertha, smoothing its satin folds.

"It is pretty," said the Bishop, astonishing her so that she could only look at him silently as he continued with great earnestness:

"You are feeling better than you did? happier? more contented? with less thought of Africa? We have been hoping so. I am glad if these children have been something to you, for you have been so much to them. Emma has appreciated it even more than I can, for she has an idea"—dropping his voice—"that the nurse takes them to all sorts of streets and places. And your goodness to Pierre has not passed unnoticed, either. It is a comfort to us to feel he is so constantly in such safe and charming company. He is not a trouble to you?"

"Oh, no. As you say," simply, "between a woman of my age and a man of his a real friendship is perfectly safe—even from tongues. I quite enjoy his society. He makes me feel young—younger than himself, at times, and at your age and mine such retrogression is very agreeable." She rose, dropping a prayer-book as she spoke, from whose leaves fell a card. Danny, whose education was at the obtrusive stage, grabbed it hungrily. "'F. D. A.," he proclaimed. "I can read big people's writing now, Uncle Sid! What is 'F. D. A.'? Does that stand for 'Miss Rix'?"

"You stopped at St. Philip's for evensong?" asked the Bishop. St. Philip's was Dr. Whyte's church, and was situated less than three blocks away.

"Yes. It is not my church, you know, but I have formed a little half-habit of slipping in there when I am near." She had never acknowledged to herself that the habit had grown on a basis of probability that the Bishop, who made it his church home so far as was possible to "an episcopal tramp," as Dr. Whyte styled him, might be present in pew or chancel, to be met afterwards in the aisles. On such secret nourishment under-fed hearts can live. But of late she had not seen the Bishop there much, and it had not been because of his defection.

"Did you see Whyte?" he asked. "Did he speak to you about anything?"

Miss Rix paled a little. "Speak to me?" she reëchoed. "No, his assistant read the service. Of what should he speak?" rather haughtily.

"Of the font. It was—is—a beautiful creation, as new as the rest of the church, but there is some mysterious defect in the marble. It is all turning yellow, as though with age, and there are cracks veining it up and down, one large one which is spreading slowly and keeps them filling it up with cement. Experts say it is from the heat, the position being too near the steam-pipes."

"And you—Dr. Whyte—somebody wants me to give a new one?"

"If you would," said the Bishop almost humbly. "The church is not a wealthy one, you know, and the congregation have recently put a good deal of money into a parish house. You said once, in speaking of memorials to your father, that you believed in relatively small gifts to existing institutions, rather than in building some magnificent new show-piece of a church in a locality where it may not be needed. I always thought that so wise of you."

"They shall have it," said Miss Rix. "Ask Dr. Whyte to give an estimate of the amount needed, and I will send him a check." She seemed pleased, rather than interested—a paradox quite common where people are preoccupied.

"What shall we call it?—'The Rix Memorial Font'?"

"I suppose so," said Miss Rix absently, holding out her hand for the prayer-book, which Danny had been poring over. "Come, children, or the horses will have run away."

"Some time after evensong we will look about the church together and choose a good position, sufficiently far from the heat," continued the Bishop, rising also.

"Oh, that will not be necessary," said Miss Rix. "I don't care where it goes."

"Wait," said the Bishop. He had crossed over to the mantel of the study. "Has Pierre shown you this? It came just two days ago—a

snap-shot, taken by one of the friends she is travelling with; she is as yet too nervous to consciously sit for a photograph."

"Mrs. d'Invilliers?" asked Miss Rix stiffly, taking it to the light. It was a childish face, with appealing eyes and a mouth as inexperienced in life as Bertha's—a young, hapless thing she looked, a pretty butterfly caught unawares in the great machinery of marriage and motherhood. There was pathos in the rather frightened eyes, but Miss Rix hardened her heart. This was the woman who could leave her children—such children!—and found herself too weak and fretful for the feather-weight burden of wifely companionship to so blithe and kindly a spirit as Pierre's.

"She too will thank you," said the Bishop simply, "when she comes back."

"That's our old mamma," explained Danny to Bertha.

"Why, who is your new one?" asked their uncle.

"Aunt Emma, isn't she?" with eyes wide open. "And Miss Rix, and Margaret, and—everybody, I guess."

Miss Rix drew the two up to her heart in one convulsive embrace which crumpled the pretty dress. "You poor kittens!" she murmured, and led them out of the house to the carriage with fierce black stamping horses like those in a fairy-tale, and whirled them away to the Park. The handsome equipage, with the handsome woman handsomely dressed, and the beautiful children chattering vivaciously, attracted attention—from mothers driving with their own children, who bestowed on them the cold, indifferent, inspecting stare of the married woman, to soft young girls, who smiled merrily at them from bicycles and pony-carts, and older women, leaning back alone in carriages more sumptuous than her own or wearily resting on benches. These last gazed wistfully after them, and Miss Rix recognized with a thrill and a pang all in one that they took her for the mother of these children. The envy in their gaze acted on her like a cordial. Characteristically, it did not occur to her for an instant that the fine carriages and horses, or her own attire, could contribute to it. She closed her eyes and let the children chirp in her ears, pretending to herself that the next word would be "mamma," then opened them in a sudden restless realization of the forlornness of the little play. After waiting for the tendrils of her heart to wind themselves a little closer round them, that woman in Europe would return and take them away—not Bertha! not the baby whom she could leave! It should not be. She, Miss Rix, would adopt the baby, give her advantages she could never have otherwise—a woman like that could be bought off with a bracelet, and Pierre—Pierre loved his child, but he plainly thought a great deal also of her, and he could see Bertha as often as he liked, the oftener the better. Her fancy rested deliriously on a picture of a beautiful, bright hearth-fire before which she would sit with Bertha

in her arms, all her own,—no relentless nurse coming to reclaim her,—and Pierre would come, perhaps daily, for he would want to see his child often——

She almost rose in the carriage, disturbing the little ones cuddled at her knees, her lips stinging from the blow with which three light, white, ungloved fingers—her own—had dealt them. "Poison!" she said aloud, in a tone which thrilled with sharp warning. Even while quailing before the self-administered rebuke, she could not resist a certain pride in the force of character that could so summarily and nobly suppress even so harmless and natural a tendency to forbidden ground. But her coachman had heard her speak, and turned around.

"Did you give an order, ma'am?" he asked.

"I did," replied Miss Rix briefly. She said no more, and after looking puzzled for an instant, the man turned the horses homeward, thinking that must have been the order. She did not deter him. It was growing late, and Pierre would be stopping for his children before they three had played their favorite romping game, which, owing to its devastating effect on back hair, clothes, and all the furniture within reach, could only be engaged in within Miss Rix's own four walls. Danny called it "The Giantess All Asleep." Miss Rix would lie on the lounge and shut her eyes, while the children approached and in low tones discussed the safety of "mining" operations. This euphemistic term meant climbing all over her prostrate body and poking about for the small round candies she always carried now, in pocket, belt, or chate-laine, sometimes in her tightly closed hand. At the psychological moment the giantess would awake, grasp the marauders, who would squeal in conscientiously assumed terror, and do with them what she would, which was usually to kiss them.

Sometimes, to prolong the pleasure of the soft, trailing little fingers on her face and body, on which they exercised almost a hypnotic influence, she would lie too long without waking; when they would calmly lie down on her like two small and deliberate avalanches, pretending also to sleep, and, as the situation was one of considerable discomfort to each of the three strata of humanity, even including the topmost, who was in danger of rolling off and bumping her head, the outcome was a prompt landslide of everything, including the bag of candies, for which the children scrambled with whoops of delight. It was a glorious game, but not a dignified one, and it was impossible to play it in the great parlor where Pierre was sitting at the piano waiting for them, as he was to-day.

"Had a pleasant drive, chickens?" he asked. "I wish Miss Rix would spoil me,—by answering all my questions, for instance. What does 'F. D. A.' stand for? It is on two—no, three—pieces of your music, scribbled up in the right-hand corner. Is it a motto? There

was an old king in my English History who had 'Fidei Defensor' put on his coins—but what does the 'A' stand for?"

"Ask Danny," said Miss Rix. "'A was an apple-pie,' wasn't it, Danny? 'B bit it, C cried for it, D greatly desired it——'"

"'F fought for it, G got it!'" cried Danny, clapping his hands. "Those are the letters Miss Rix has on the big sash in her dressing-room, up across the mirror. We are little enough to see under it, but she can't see herself at all."

"Then she does not know how pretty her gown is!" said his father. "How very sad!" He had swung himself up on the large table, with the boyish air which so became him. Miss Rix's eyes followed him fondly—maternally, she felt. The innocence, the beauty of a friendship between a man like Pierre and a woman like herself, nine years older, and panoplied with principles, occupied a great deal of her thoughts in these days, causing a warm congratulatory glow in her conscience. Strange, we do so much thinking, and so little of it is unflattering to ourselves! She felt his every movement drawing her heartstrings irresistibly—his departure tearing them with helpless pain. She felt herself restlessly, hurriedly living through the empty spaces between his visits. She surrounded herself with warnings of the easy descent into hell. But with the awe-inspiring duplicity of the human heart she continued to congratulate herself upon the innocence of the relation.

"Will you wear it to the German opera?" asked Pierre, his eyes still fixed upon her.

"I do not think I will go to the German opera," she answered in a low voice.

"Why not?" he asked quietly.

"I—do not think it would be well," nervously. "Concerts are not quite the same thing—and perhaps I have gone with you to too many of them." Her voice was steadier now. "Perhaps, too, it would be better for you to send Margaret more often for the children, instead of coming here yourself nearly every day."

Pierre's face went white—so white that it filled her with an intolerable joy. It was the surgeon's feeling as the blood wells out when he makes an incision in the body to see if there be life.

"I see no reason why I should not," said Pierre deliberately. He was groping around for the cause of this breathless, beaten feeling that possessed him, and the cause of his groping was that he had shut his eyes. A woman of a few years' seniority and great, unconscious charm, who had unwittingly opened a heart harsh and prickly to the whole outside world and beckoned his loneliness into its softness and warmth, had become so dear to him that the prospect of seeing less of her hurt him like a blow. That did not prove that he was in love with her. He thrilled uncontrollably at the thought that it might prove that she was

in love with him, but with every fibre of his being impulsively feeling out for her he stubbornly repeated, "I see nothing wrong in my inviting you to the German opera. Have you not invited me to a ball?"

"Yes, but it is not our ball, but the College Settlement's. It is not a festivity, but what Miss Dougall's set would call one of my 'works.' And you do not need to go with me. I have attended many such balls alone." A slight sigh escaped her.

"You shall not go to this one alone," said Pierre with animation. "Nor will I go to the German opera alone. I don't know why you object. Surely, we——" he stopped.

"Surely, we——" is an argument which seldom fails with those of us moving in what we style the spiritual "upper atmosphere." Miss Rix had moved in it for many years. She knew her reputation was safe as any mortal woman's. For her heart, its suffering was her own affair; for Pierre, she could not marry him, which, she told herself with new-learned cynicism, is the chief injury any woman can deal any man; for God, if He did not like it He could stop it!

"I will go one night," she said waveringly, and then they both looked brighter, as having been plucked back from the precipice of doing something disagreeable, and felt themselves nobler, as having successfully grappled with temptation.

When she had seen him go, with a child clinging happily to either hand, the likeness the Bishop had so tactlessly exhibited to her rose up before her—the appealing eyes, the helpless mouth, the frail, nervous hand wearing Pierre's ring. She broke out against it passionately. "Let her stay with him then to protect him. She does not want him with her—well, I do!"

She had him with her the next week at the opera, evening after evening, and her confidence in the unassailability of her reputation was not misplaced. Her world could not help but notice that Miss Rix was growing, not younger, for that does not come, but handsomer, more gracious,—the only things that count,—with richer life glowing in her eyes and cheeks and transforming her personality; that she was dressing more, dining more, smiling more. Being a world more charitable than its enemies will admit, it was only pleased, and thought no evil. The discovery of an unexpectedly large balance of public esteem is a temptation to spend it, like any other windfall. "I have been too good too long!" she told herself firmly. Her conscience was a morbidly sensitive one—had not Bishop West himself hinted it?—and should not rob her of this last wistful, harmless glance through the barred gate to happiness. Let it think of the font for St. Philip's and keep quiet. She had sent Dr. Whyte a larger check than he had asked for, and received a grateful letter, warmly worded, to which she referred triumphantly all inward inquiries as to character and repute.

Nevertheless, a tremor of nervousness ran through her as she dressed herself—it was regarded as one of her eccentricities to dispense with a personal attendant—for the Thistle Club ball at the College Settlement. True, a soft gray crêpe touched with coral, only slightly open at the neck, and with sleeves to the elbow, was neither very gay in itself nor wholly unsuited to her years. But she had usually attended these festivities in plainer garb. She could see the gown, even her shoulders, under the broad white ribbon stretched across the glass, with three staring black initials painted on it, but not the face. She impatiently tore down the ribbon and looked herself boldly in the eyes. "Just the dream," she said pleadingly. "I do not ask anything real—he could not give it, I would not take it—it is not wrong. Let me have the dream—it is such a little way to forty!"

She had never cared much for poetry, nor known she had read much. But lines out of forgotten albums and gilded gift-books of her youth sang in her ears as she descended steps of air to the reception-room and Pierre,—

"O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet,
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet!"

There was another stanza to it, bolder—about letting the sweet heavens endure "till I am quite, quite sure that there is one to love me,"—and with a terrifying refrain, "Then let come what come may—I shall have had my day."

How absurd to try to ignore this tremendous factor in life, which every pen had written about, or to escape from it! "Is human love the growth of human will?" was another reasonable proposition in rhyme—only she wished it too had been said by the exemplary Tennyson instead of the questionable Byron,—and there was still another from some source she did not know, which Pierre had once quoted in conversation,—

"It only means that souls that dwell apart
Yield sometimes to the human need of loving."

"The human need!" there it was in a nutshell! And if it were ever wrong, why then, in such cases, let Gods and bishops and wives watch over their own!

Pierre's eyes glistened as she entered the room, consciously beautiful for once in many years. "That—that gown!" he said stumbingly. It was not the gown, although he did notice it.

"Is it too festive?" she asked falteringly. "I thought I might dress up for the poor things for once." She had never called them "poor things" before. "Why, you brought your violin!"

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"I thought it might help out the piano," he said.

"How kind you are!" said the woman,—she did not know, nor quite care, how fondly. Nor did he.

"The—the gown—is simply great," he murmured, fastening her gloves as no one had ever done in her briefly extinguished youth. The arteries in her wrists began to beat under his fingers as responsive as a flute when the stops are played. Suddenly they ceased, as he dropped her hand abruptly at an unpleasant thought. "Will Uncle Sid be there?" he asked, shortly. Before his eyes floated a picture which had become almost obscured, of a tall, sad woman laying a white cheek on the hard desk at which a man worked. To her it seemed a Miss Rix of a thousand years ago who had done that; to him, who really lacked vanity, it came much nearer and more as a disagreeable reality.

"No," she answered with some surprise. Then, correcting herself, "I don't expect him. He has a right, of course, as a trustee, to attend everything. Why?"

That intoxicating "Why?" echoed dizzily in the young man's head as they walked, in complete silence, to the Settlement Hall. Long ago—as long as that dream-scene in the Bishop's study—he had had some vague, careless idea of overcoming this woman—just a light, harmless, experimental conquest that would not cut deep or hurt her, undertaken to see if it were possible; now the thought that it might not be possible to cut her to the heart, in the word's literal sense, and place himself within the wound, though it hurt her to everlasting time and cost his own soul, maddened him. This is what men call love, and women take it thankfully. It is often strongest when inspired by the charm maturity has for immaturity, and enhanced by the halo of unattainability. This was why she, a woman of forty, dancing with a demurring, half-guilty gayety to the tune of his violin over the unpainted boards of the Settlement Hall, in the arms of awed, sleek-haired, anxious-eyed Jewish youths as much his juniors as he was hers, sent an angry pain all over him. That such as they should touch her, while he sat in durance by the little stage, fiddling away his opportunity!

The dancing had not been intended. The young girls of the Thistle Club had exclaimed tumultuously over her lovely gown, whose like had never been seen in the hall before. It had indeed cost more than the entire furnishings of the room, piano and all. "Going to dance, Miss Rix?" they inquired, caressingly fingering it. "Oh, yes, for certain; you wouldn't wear that lovely dress and get no good of it! You can't have forgotten the motions; let us girls show you, and it will all come back."

Before she fairly realized it, she was whirling about the room—whether gracefully and in time or not she never knew—with one Thistle Club boy after the other, who came up excitedly with beaded brows to

ask for the honor. One she had educated from childhood; another she had saved from an ugly scrape which had come near culminating behind prison bars; scarcely one of them, or of the others present in the room, to whom she was not the Lady Bountiful, the good angel, past, present, and presumptive, of their lives. They, who alone, with one other, loved and understood her, looked with simple, pure eyes on their lady enjoying herself, and felt that what she did was good.

"She ain't proud," they commented. She heard it, and looked with brilliant, reckless eyes at Pierre every time she passed him, unguessing—for she too was not vain—the tumult of causeless jealousy within him, until he abruptly dropped his bow.

"Dance with me now," he ordered, stepping up. Men had hitherto only made requests of her, and she thrilled to the command which implied ownership. Pierre was a perfect dancer, so different from the heavy Hebrew boys that with him she seemed to be ascending billow after billow of air, until her head was dizzy with the motion and the happiness. She was taking the strongest tonic in the world. Oh, what an innocent, high-thoughted, kindly-spirited world it was, with nothing in it but love after all!

"O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet,"

mingled with the strains of the piano she had bought. This was her kingdom, in which she was tasting the bewildering sweets of supreme power, and Pierre and she were reigning together in it without let or hinderance. It was her own, as Calypso's island was, and he was her own, an Odysseus shipwrecked into her arms, deserted by his Penelope. "Oh, *rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.*" The rhythm swung dizzily through her head, and conscious that she was perhaps too excited, and Pierre's eyes, which he did not remove from her, too speaking, she stopped suddenly for breath. As she did so, the billows of air suddenly broke beneath her, the roses which had seemed to fill her arms faded and pricked and smelt stalc. An awful wave of overwhelming doubt and consuming longing for something lost came up cold about her—the same feeling precisely that she had when Pierre played the "Kuiawiak." A little group of half-a-dozen visitors had entered the room, only two of whom were strangers. The others were Bishop West with his sister, and Milly Dougall and the French Consul. And Milly's piercing young eyes gazed—and gazed.

"Why," said Pierre's uncle, "you make me regret that I cannot dance, and would probably be criticised if I did."

"Not here," said Pierre. "There are no standards of criticism."

"So it seems," said Miss Dougall. Her own little foot was never-

theless tapping the floor impatiently to the music, which was really very good. But she had conscientiously dressed in a street gown.

"You came to see how the other half dances?" inquired Pierre. He felt no inclination to ask her as a partner. He had come to think the girl raw, shallow, petty—all that Miss Rix thought her.

"There is something so fine about everything Miss Rix does," said the Bishop in a low voice to his nephew. "She knows it pleases these friends of hers to dance with them and among them."

He moved off in a moment with his sister and his friends, to show these last the building, but in departure held Miss Rix's hand cordially and a little longer than necessary, and his nephew, who an hour before would have hated him for it, now loved him. But Milly Dougall twisted back her head with its hard, clear eyes. "What do you hear from Mrs. d'Invilliers?" she asked.

"She is better," answered Pierre composedly. "In a few months we expect her to return, completely herself again."

When the door had swung upon them, Caroline Rix turned to him with the face of one who has been struck a mortal blow. "Take me home," she said; "or—no, you shall not. I will go alone."

"Alone?—in that gown? What is the matter? Every man in the street will notice you."

"Let them. They are safer than——" She did not finish it.

"Let me take you to the door," he plead, not quite uncomprehending. "There is no cause for this changing mood, but I will not ask to go in."

"You must never go in again," she said, and meant it.

Home alone—in a cab he insisted on calling for her—she went, and kneeling on the beautiful gown in a crushed heap, with her face in a chair, wept, but was not ready to pray. Instead, she raised an anguished face to God and accused Him. "A woman for nothing," she repeated, sobbing tragically. "With hands, feet,"—springing to them fiercely and outstretching her palms,—“head, heart, like other women, and no life like theirs. When it comes at last I must renounce it. Oh, I will renounce it, but it is hard, unjust!” Mingling with her tears and sickness of heart was the spell of the evening's intoxication, not all gone. She saw his eyes as they shone into hers—she knew that despite the sin of it, the strangeness of it, to him neither sin nor strangeness, he loved her, so worthy of love, so ardent to return it; and again recklessness flamed up in her. In terror lest she act on it, she fairly ran into her dressing-room and wrote three agitated words on a scrap of paper and hurried it into an envelope, blistering the direction with her tears. "Take this to the box and post it," she said to the sleepy servant who answered an impatient buzz of the bell.

"Caroline Rix," she had written under the three Latin words, and

the name had for the first time struck her as pretty, young, and girlish-sounding,—a name to sign to happy, harmless love-letters in fresh youth. Oh, youth, youth, with its opportunities! how mad she had been to think these could be renewed by a guilty love! She shivered at the words, but harshly repeated them, and then crept, still shivering, into bed, where, surprising though it may seem, she slept, physically exhausted by the emotions of the evening.

Of course, there must be one last firm, sad talk with Pierre, who would come to protest against her attitude. But he did not. Even the children did not come for their daily visit, and against that her own spirit protested. With the insolence of misery, she warned God against going too far with her, or it would be to His own loss. A soul was more to Him than to her, just then. She loved those children, and would not have her life's late garden plucked completely bare.

The second day they came, brought by no less a person than the Bishop. "Bertha had a little cold yesterday," he said, "and would not hear of Danny coming without her. But to-day it was better, and she cried so disconsolately when her father said he could not bring them that I did it myself, as I wanted, anyhow, to ask you about a text for the font. Whyte says 'Suffer little children' is too hackneyed. Whyte always throws new light."

"Have anything you like," said Miss Rix. Her lip was trembling a little from disappointment at Pierre's non-appearance, and she was despising herself for it and wishing the Bishop would go. He did so in a few moments, stopping to thoughtfully finger the light locks on Bertha's brow as Miss Rix rocked her back and forth in a big chair, for the child was still what old nurses call "droopy" from her cold. "You look quite like a Madonna," he said gently.

"It must be the Sistine, then," said Miss Rix, more sharply than she had ever spoken to him. "She does always remind me of a middle-aged washerwoman unenthusiastically regarding her seventh child." The Bishop sighed a little and went. Miss Rix had not wanted him to stay, but she half scorned him that he did not. All women have evil moods when they despise innocence in a man. That blind serenity, that invincible charity—they were very beautiful, but they made him less of a man, less even of a bishop. Why could he not see that his friend and his nephew were in grave jeopardy, only saved from descent into hell by their own incorruptibility, not by one warning word from him? This train of thought did not last long, however; there was nothing of the poseur about her, and her heart knew that she was crying, not over neglect from her spiritual director, not over her own great lapse from the stern path of safety, but over the unendurable, impossible, hideous prospect of days upon days, years upon years, of blank deprivation of Pierre and his children.

A Woman for Nothing

Not of Bertha! Bertha should not be taken from her. She tightened her clasp on the child, who stirred in her arms with a peevish movement and exclamation.

"Bertha's naughty," said Danny didactically. "Yes, she is. She spit out the pretty candy you gave her, and if it hadn't been for me it would have been wasted. Said she couldn't swallow it."

"Let's see your little throat, my bird," said Miss Rix. The child opened her mouth, then closed it, beginning to cry. "Hurt Berfa," she sobbed pathetically.

"She makes a lot of fuss," said the judicial Danny. "My throat hurts me too, but I didn't say a word about it, and I'll try to eat some more candy, if you've got it."

"Let me see where the last went," said Miss Rix uneasily. When she had examined his throat she went to the telephone and sent a message to her physician. In too many homes of the poor had she seen those dread white patches, for too many sad little private funerals had she paid, to lightly take chances of diphtheria. When Margaret came to take them home,—*"Tell Miss West I will keep Bertha over night,"* she said. *"She is not well, and ought not to go out into the air."*

"Not well, is it?" repeated Margaret nervously. "What way shouldn't she be well, ma'am? Sure, she niver has sore throats nor things." Her manner plainly betrayed anxiety. Miss Rix looked at her terribly.

"Where did you take them?" she asked. "Was it diphtheria?"

"I didn't tell," put in Danny nobly. "Not 'cause you bought the jewsharp, but 'cause I promised."

"Sure, I thought it was only a bit of sore throat in the house," said Margaret, crying. "Thim doctors does paste up colored cards for iverthing, and I only stopped in for a dish of tay for five minutes."

"Go tell the Bishop so," said Miss Rix curtly. The difference between Sidney West's gentleness and his nephew's easy-going amiability was that when a rebuke was to be administered, one had an instinctive desire that the Bishop should deal with the offender.

When the girl had gone with her tears and protestations, Miss Rix put Bertha in her own bed—a wee white oasis of weeping humanity in a desert of red satin quilt. Then she took Danny, who noisily protested that "his throat would be all gone if he had a little more candy," in her arms, and grimly rocked him until Pierre came. She had known he would come, but had not wished to bring him for such a cause. He was hurried, agitated, constrained in manner, but as they spoke only of the children, she had no way of telling whether or not she had hurt him past healing. The doctor did not come, and Pierre asked formally if he could wait downstairs to see him. "Certainly," said Miss Rix.

"May I wait here instead?" The lights were cheerful, though shaded; a brilliant fire burned in the grate: the atmosphere of home was in the room, and his sick child was in it also. As she hesitated, he handed her a piece of paper. On it, in her handwriting, were the words, "*Facilis descensus Averni.*"

"I received this yesterday morning," he said coldly. "I see no need for the warning."

Miss Rix grew even paler than she was before. "Then the more shame to me," she said almost inaudibly. She put her finger on her lip to keep the last word, and motioned him to a stuffed chair, where in complete silence he waited the doctor's coming. Miss Rix saw herself in her mirror through the open door of her dressing-room, and thought how well it was she was looking white and haggard and hollow-eyed, and wore an old and unbecoming gown, the purple one which had once brought down his strictures, and whose hem he (and she after him) had kissed!

The doctor came at nine and was professionally non-committal, emphatically commending Miss Rix's wisdom in all she had done. "It is too soon to tell whether it is diphtheria," he said, "but you had best keep the boy here. You have telephoned for a trained nurse? That is good."

The trained nurse came the next day, but between Miss Rix and the sick baby's father she found little to do save to keep Danny in bed in another room. For the white web spread in the little red throat, and Bertha grew quiet instead of peevish, and neither Miss Rix nor Pierre would suffer anyone else, scarcely each other, to watch and tend her. Bishop West broke the strict quarantine of the house to see Miss Rix and insist that she let his sister, since she would not trust hirelings, take her place. "It is not as if she were of your own blood," he said. "And there are so many to whom your life is valuable."

"It is not valuable to me," said Miss Rix shortly. "And I have had diphtheria, while neither you nor Emma have. So many come and go in your house, it would be madness to spread contagion there."

During those days and nights of watching and isolation—for Pierre did everything but sleep in the house, giving every moment to his sick children—it was impossible to keep up an atmosphere of estrangement. Their breath mingled as they bent over the stricken baby; their hands, trembling with apprehension, met as they raised the little silken head to pour ineffectual medicine down the throat so tightly closing,—and trembled still more. Once she inadvertently called him Pierre, and when he, with thankful recognition flashing from his wet eyes, called her Carine in turn, she felt that it was but just that in this hour of supreme need and loneliness someone should be with him to bear the cross down the way of sorrow. In the midst of the sickening suspense and still more sickening certainty of grief there was an under-thrill

of fierce gladness that it was she who stood at his shoulder, she who could comfort him.

"There is not much change in the little one, but the boy will get well," said the doctor one day, and left them dazed by the unexpected release from the double tension of anxiety. They had expected to lose both children. Pierre impulsively put out an arm,—not far,—drew her to him, and kissed her. It seemed quite natural, and not very wrong. Though they looked at one another rather wildly over the tumult of their own hearts, knowing that their relations could never be the same again, they talked on constrainedly about tinctures and temperatures and serums. And the next day Bertha died.

VI.

"It was by far the wisest thing," said Miss West, with simple pride in her own arrangements, as Caroline Rix looked about her almost restively at the pretty nest of a nursery where they were sitting. Every nook and corner, every torn book and toy no one had had the heart to put away, was eloquent of the sweet baby they had three days ago put in freezing February ground to be rained and snowed on, which, as Holmes says, is a hard thing to do for those whom we have cherished tenderly. Danny, whom it seemed neither woman could now bear out of her sight, was trying to break in a fresh young rocking-horse, and making a cheerful noise over it which hurt Miss West's heart. She said, almost bitterly, that she supposed it was the French in him, then repeated her first remark:

"By far the wisest. It was through us, however innocently, that the disease came into your house, and while the fumigation or disinfection or whatever they call it is in progress, where else should you come but to us? I could not bear to have you alone at a hotel, and Sidney says the same. I am sure I don't know what Pierre would do without your kindness and comfort, and distraction of his mind in letting him work with you among the poor. Though," with faint resentment, "he is not so completely prostrated as I expected him to be."

Miss Rix in reply looked around her at the four walls with the impatience of a caged bird. In her heart she almost felt, in her face almost showed, a disdain for the impenetrable innocence of these old friends. She had not wished to come, and had only yielded, partly in the passivity of grief, partly for lack of an excuse which should be valid in even their eyes. Well, if they would set temptation before her and force her to dishonor hospitality, on their own heads be it; for herself she was resolved on her course.

Pierre came to the nursery door in a few minutes—a sadder and paler Pierre, with marks of new agitation added to those of old suffering on his face. In his hand he held a cablegram.

"You have heard from Ethel!" exclaimed his aunt. "I knew you would, and that only difficulty in forwarding your message could have caused the delay. What mother——"

"Here, read it," interrupted Pierre shortly. But he passed it first to Miss Rix. It was from Ethel's mother.

"All feel deeply," she wrote. "Will write sympathy. Not safe tell Ethel, though stronger. Break later."

"In this hour too she—I must—all alone," muttered Pierre, almost as disconnectedly as the cablegram. It was his trembling lips. He flung himself on a chair, and put his head on his arms and sobbed boyishly, while Miss West, to control her own tears, left the room. Danny precipitately followed her, having found that when big people were crying they would let you have or do almost anything.

Without a moment's hesitation Miss Rix crossed over to him and put her arms about him. There had been a strange scene in her house during the first hour after Bertha died, when she, who had expected to be his strength and stay, sank in a paroxysm of sorrow into his arms, to be upheld and comforted with awkward man-tenderness and caresses salt with his own tears,—and had found grief almost sweet on his shoulder. It was almost sweet again in requital to dry his tears on her own white cheek. For she was not kissing cold wood this time.

"You do not forsake me, do you?" murmured the man brokenly, and she answered him recklessly. From that hour, with the extraordinary logic of their kind, they felt a last link on one side broken, a last one on another forged, and with greater and greater assurance faced a world which with steadfast stupidity let them alone. With Pierre in deep black and Miss Rix's own heart sore with bereavement, there were no more concerts or Settlement dances, but there was much good to be done in the world, which with feverish earnestness they set themselves to do, Pierre acting as her almoner. If the sick in the hospitals did not kiss their shadows as they passed with fruit and flowers, they murmured audible blessings which were very sweet to hear; and the struggling, weary-eyed women whom Miss Rix had known from young girlhood, whose rent she eked out, whose men she found work for, whose children she fondled, told her more openly than ever before that she was an angel, and Pierre said and believed the same.

"You see this world averages us up," he said, "like a school-examination, and if we are on the whole pretty decent, it passes us in spite of a slip or two. We do more good—or you do—in a day than one of your Pharisees in a year."

But they met no Pharisees, and Miss Rix's eyes grew brighter and brighter, her heart bolder and bolder. She had hitherto thought of sinners as we do of Kamschatkans—as remote rather than contemptible. Now she was finding that they felt very much like other people,

and were very much like other people, only perhaps better, as Pierre said. She was in fact almost terrified to find how easily a conscience could adjust itself, and felt that, having been so deceived in her own, it had forfeited all claim to consideration. She had always supposed that in such cases there was a fleeting superficial joy above a deep gnawing sense of shame; she was finding that the shame could be brushed aside, while the happiness defiantly remained. Later the situation might change, but now—oh, let the solid ground not fail beneath her feet!

Yet were there no moments when the instincts and traditions of a lifetime had their way and said their say with her? There were such moments; moments when her heart seemed breaking over herself; nights wept away in piteous repentance which a short exhausted sleep blotted out; days when the serene, unsuspecting atmosphere of this saintly household seemed choking her, as she had known it would; hours when she restlessly craved discovery, scorn, punishment—anything but this awful conspiracy of innocence. Against Bishop West her resentment had completely vanished now; in its place came a timid revival of tenderness, almost of love, a humble and propitiatory manner which she wanted him to remember in her when he should feel most outraged and betrayed. But there was scarcely time for many such moods; the descent to Avernus would not be easy if it were not swift. In one of them she passed by Dr. Whyte's church at the hour of evensong and heard the congregation singing at her.

Even to souls long hardened in sin there is deep emotional appeal in the notes of a familiar hymn, made still more soft and wistful by distance. That of Miss Rix sickened a little at its quiet reminder of things now thrust in the background. The melody stole out to her, caught her footsteps hurrying by, embraced her knees, wept and plead with her, wrung its hands over her like a living thing, though it was only:

"Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea;
And laden souls, by thousands meekly stealing——"

Miss Rix turned back, not meekly, but abruptly, stole into the vestibule, and heard the hymn through, tearlessly, but with an infinite calm regret. Far, far away, indeed! She would not come inside, to join in prayers she would not for all the world have fulfilled, with lips yet warm with kisses she would not for all the world, and heaven and hell beside it, renounce. But it was a pity God was so unreasonable. Impulsively she drew out one of the blank cards she always had with her and wrote on it, "Two persons in great distress of mind request the prayers of the church," and slipped it into the rector's box, then went home and wept unrestrainedly, with a cynical undercurrent of self-gauging wonder, "How long will this mood last?"

It lasted until two days later, when Pierre said to her suddenly, but not unexpectedly, "The Company wants me to go to California." The possibility had been spoken of before. "It is a better position than this. I think I shall go."

"I should, in your case," said Miss Rix calmly, through the suffocating throbs of her heart—an emotional paradox which occurs when some deeply agitating and long apprehended crisis comes, and we stiffen to the encounter. "Shall you take Danny?"

"I shall take you," replied the man briefly. "You promised never to forsake me. Surely, you—we both—knew that it would come to this."

She had indeed known it would come to this. For weeks she had been arranging her affairs, secretly almost from herself, to be ready at any time for flight with Pierre to any corner of the earth which might hold a life for them together. Between casting away a past and a future, what sane woman—of forty—would hesitate? And Pierre lost nothing by it, not even his child, for the law gave a boy over seven to the father. The dull red in her cheeks at the thought of the different conditions under which that sad piece of divorce-court lore had come to her did not last a minute. "I will go with you if you want me, Pierre," she said steadily. "I will never leave you until you leave me. That will come, of course—I am prepared for it. An older woman——"

He laughed her out of it. To him—and he said so—she was Cleopatra, Ninon de l'Enclos, everything, and the few years' seniority but made it more deeply touching that this ripened woman of the world, with all the unanalyzable charm of development about her, should prove, after all, only a soft, loving creature to whom his smile was life. To a younger or an older man it would have been dangerous to show so much affection; but he was at the racked period of storm and stress when humankind most feels the weakness it disbelieves at twenty and philosophically accepts at forty, and he clung to her ardently.

Through business exigencies the departure must be made so suddenly that it left Caroline Rix little time to quail. She told her hosts that when Pierre and Danny left she must go back to her own house, now completely disinfected of disease and ready to receive her. That gave a day's grace to the disappearance which must prove such a nine-days' talk and wonder. They protested, but with less of inconvenient insistence than if Miss West had not been deep in a campaign of household upheaval which went by the name of cleaning, and the Bishop much pre-occupied over a programme of six-o'clock Lenten services for working-people, which Dr. Whyte was to conduct at St. Philip's and the Bishop to open on the eve of Ash-Wednesday. There was much of Dr. Whyte's presence in the house, and consultation over texts and subjects,—“good men” to present them and suitable music in which to swathe them.

Occasionally they would courteously ask her opinion, which seemed to her so surpassingly strange that she felt they ought to feel it.

"I w-want Miss Rix!" sobbed Danny, when the formal farcical good-byes were to be made. "I w-want Aunt Emmy! and I d-do' want C—California!" She wished she might tell him how soon she would be with him, never to surrender him save as she had been forced to surrender Bertha. As a matter of fact, she would be a day or two on the train without Pierre, whose plans had been complicated by the offer of the secretary of the company to share his society and impart his instructions as far as Chicago. "It's a nuisance, but I can often slip into your car," said Pierre consolingly.

The train went at five, but Pierre and the boy took their departure immediately after lunch, there being a long business conference at the company's office before he started, and Miss Rix found the house immediately intolerable, especially after the Bishop left it, with a pre-occupied hand-shake for her. He was going to St. Philip's to write in its quiet vestry-room his sermon for the following day.

"And is not your study quiet?" asked his sister. "Oh, I forgot! Nora is making a little stir. It will soon be over."

"It is all right," said the Bishop placidly. "Will I see you at evensong, Miss Rix? The carving on that font is exquisite, and you have never seen it yet."

"Not to-night. I have an engagement at four." Four? Her impatience would be well controlled if it let her wait till then. In the railroad station the hours would not seem so long, for she would be nearer Pierre—and California. "Do you mind?" she asked.

"Any day will do," answered the Bishop, with the dauntless good-nature which so hurt her. She stopped in his study, when going, to leave in its atmosphere a mute pleading farewell which one so spiritually sensitive must surely feel.

For the moment her heart, sore and sinking under the prospect of a change, almost received him back into that old affection which had made her lay her cheek on the desk. She impulsively laid it there again at the thought—her cheek and a hot tear, whose stain she hoped he might see. Then she almost ran out into the street, past row after row of blinding yellow-and-white suburban houses architecturally all alike. All alike too in that their inmates to-day would flutter with joy if the wealthy and philanthropic Miss Rix should enter their doors; all alike in that to-morrow these doors would be closed to her forever!

She wished she did not have to pass St. Philip's, but there was no other route. In its open door-way, at which she glanced precisely because of the nervous feeling that it would not be safe to do so, stood two men talking. One looked like a janitor; the other was the Bishop in his cassock and with his silver halo uncovered. He saw her before

she could avoid it. "Good-afternoon," he called cheerily. "You have not time to come in, you said? I was just looking for you, or someone like you, to give me a minute's help."

"I suppose I have time," she said reluctantly, looking, as a matter of form, at the exquisite bejewelled watch she wore hanging from a chatelaine. Actually, she knew she had plenty of time, her restlessness having driven her forth earlier even than she had intended starting for the station. A minute's help might expiate the many hours of pain she was to give Pierre's uncle. She came in, nervously fingering the watch, and looked at and admired the font, though the Bishop said she need not stop for that if she were in a hurry. "It is an artistic piece of marble-work," he said. "Whyte and I chose the inscription, since we could not make its donor do so. Does it please you?"

Miss Rix's eyes followed the difficult German script which ran about the rim,—

"Die to sin and live again unto righteousness."

—"Continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of life," finished the Bishop simply. "I think the rest of it will come into the mind of anyone who reads the first, and of course we could not put it all on. How beautiful our baptismal service is! the most beautiful in the book, to my thinking. And how solemn its pledges!"

"Yes," said Miss Rix restlessly. "I wonder if my watch is right?" A panic of impatience had seized her. Tugging at the watch to bring it around to the dim light, she wrenched the bow-ring apart, and the Bishop pounded it together for her with his penknife—he always had a resource ready—while he talked, and while she paced about the broad aisle with a nervousness which she hoped escaped him.

"I wanted to consult you," he said, "about one of the greatest perplexities of my perplexed life."

"Is your life perplexed?" she asked. For in his speaking sadly had come the realization that she had never heard him speak so before.

He raised his eyes to hers. "Perplexed?" he said. "There are times when I think I must lay down my surplice and my commission, and never preach or pray again. There are times when I feel I must lay down my life also. But I never spoke of them before, and they have nothing to do with the perplexity in hand. I wanted to ask you, as a hearer and a laywoman of more than the ordinary devotion and intelligence,"—he spoke so simply it would have been rank vanity to look conscious,—“what an Ash-Wednesday congregation expects? You will be here to-morrow to hear me——”

"But I will not!" cried Miss Rix unguardedly, then drew back her breath in terror. For it seemed as though the words conveyed her reason.

"Oh, well," said the Bishop, "you will be at another church hearing another man preach, and we are all in the same box—a box of weak cowards, snivelling hypocrites, unfaithful stewards,"—he spoke with a bitterness she had not thought he could contain,—“afraid to say the things the day was meant for.—I have not written my Ash-Wednesday sermon yet.”

"No?" said Miss Rix, wishing it were nearer four.

"So I cannot do such a banal thing as to read it to you," he pursued. She recollected that once she would have glowed with pleasure at the thought of his sharing his thoughts with her. "But what I would like, if you have time, is to ask you which of two texts you would choose in my place." He vanished into the vestry as he spoke, and Miss Rix had a silly childish impulse to take the opportunity to slip out of the church. Measuring time as she did now by weeks, months, cycles of Pierre, it seemed a long time since she had been the absurd sinless Miss Rix who enjoyed sitting in churches and prating about texts and sermons. Now she was become a woman, burning with love for a man, and why should she be detained?

Nevertheless, the associations of forty years are not lightly put aside. In addition to this, there is something about the silence of a great empty place of assemblage, even though used for the most prosaic purposes, which awes. The essence of humanity lingers, and, in a church, the essence of divinity also. She closed her eyes to the oriel which poured red light on her face and hands, as though spotting them with proof of guilt, and was glad when the Bishop returned, bearing the great calf-bound Bible from the vestry-room. He opened it wide.

"They are two," he said, "taken from the one passage, which I shall probably read. One is, 'And thou saidst, I shall be a lady forever.' The other, 'Desolation shall come upon thee suddenly.'" He himself stopped suddenly. "Let me read the context," he said.

"But I have not——" began Miss Rix, her voice drowned by his resonant tones. There were men in the church who preached better than Bishop West, though not enough to make it generally realized; but there were no better readers. His voice expanded like a flower, glowed like a light, pierced like a sword, so took possession of the hearer that in the holding of an irresponsible rhetorician it could have driven home the falsest conclusions. With the impress of a truth upon it, it was terrible as the battle-song and clanking spears of a bannered army. "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon," it now summoned sonorously. "Sit on the ground, for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Yea, thy shame," it threatened, "shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man."

"Oh!" cried his hearer, but the hurrying lava-flood of scorching words engulfed her protest: "Sit thou silent, and get thee in darkness,

for thou shalt no longer be called the Lady of Kingdoms." It was not reading at all; it was something indescribable. "And thou saidst, I shall be a lady forever; so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst thou remember the latter end of it. Thou hast trusted in thy wickedness. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth; desolation shall come upon thee suddenly."

He stopped here, his hands folded with a peculiar rigidity on the book, and did not move them, nor his eyes, when Miss Rix sprang to her feet. "What do you mean by reading me such things?" she cried. She knew. "Why do you look so at me, Caroline Rix?"

"At you, Caroline Rix," he answered steadily. As he spoke, the Westminster chimes of the church clock sounded for half-past four.

"Lord, in this hour
Be Thou our guide,"

was their implied prayer. She looked at her watch, which said twenty minutes of four. She held it to her ear, and then saw a tiny crack in the crystal, unnoticed before.

"You see it is ruined," said the Bishop with a stinging calmness, "in spite of its gold case. The mainspring has stopped. The excellence of the other mechanism goes for nothing."

She faced him in impotent despair. Had he only not turned his back when he knelt and pounded on the flagstone, or had she only watched more closely,—but who could suspect? It had taken him but a minute. "Oh, what have you done!" she cried.

"I dashed its life out," said the Bishop, his voice heavy with suppressed passion, "as I would sooner dash out yours than let you pass through that door,"—to which she had flown, scarcely surprised to find it locked.

"You trapped me in here!" she cried. "I see it now. You were waiting for me on the steps to draw me in and lock me up!"

"For what else am I a shepherd and bishop of souls?" he asked.

Again she flung herself upon the door—again unyielding. She had a wild thought of throwing herself upon her knees and explaining to him how she loved Pierre, whom every second was sweeping farther from her. But the words died on her lips as she looked on that face, set hard with the incomparable hardness of a good man towards an erring woman. This was that rock she had read of, that whosoever falleth on it, he shall be dashed to pieces. Then, in a rush of belated realization, she saw that he knew all she had dreaded his knowing, and dimly wondered how. She asked him.

"By this," he answered briefly, showing the card she had slipped in the rector's box. It was not blank; the other side bore her name. She flushed darkly over the blunder, then paled at the thought of what it had cost her.

A Woman for Nothing

"I guessed it before," he said, more impassively than seemed right. "I was not blind. I saw your eyes brighten for one another. But trusted in your principle and in the great disparity of your ages." She shivered. "Then when I could no longer deceive myself——"

"You deceived me," she said self-contemptuously. "I suppose you have been watching me, planning against me, with your pretended innocence giving me rope with which to hang myself." She suddenly angered herself by sobbing.

"I had faith in you," said the Bishop. "Up to the last moment I hoped to win you back by the reproach of love and trust. When that failed, I—locked the door. The prayers you asked for were so answered."

Miss Rix faced him haughtily. "Where is the key to this door?" she demanded.

"I hold it," replied the Bishop, his quick instinctive motion of protection towards the pocket where it lay dully hurting her. Did he expect her to fight and claw and snatch for it, like some base Fury of the streets?

"I hold it," he repeated slowly, "and I hold you, and shall hold you until both the hour and the impulse for this dreadful thing you contemplate, this unnatural and wicked and ruinous crime, have passed by."

"Why do you call it ruinous?" she cried, "and why unnatural? The mere difference in age?"

He bowed his head.

"It is nothing," she said feverishly. Pierre had sworn it a hundred times. "We are congenial, we adore one another—what are a few years? They are less than the difference between Henry Esmond and Lady Castlewood—yes, I know that is a case out of a book; but there are the Fords, our old friends. Was not she twelve years older than he, and yet how happy they were!"

"That was a union founded upon mutual respect," said the Bishop terribly.

"You mean—Pierre would leave me!" An anguish of long-smouldering doubt ignited at his words and burnt red in her heart. She bent her curled fingers into the soft part of her hand till they nearly broke. How slow his answer!

"Eventually, he would leave you. Such infatuations seldom last. Ethel is younger—she has right on her side—she is the mother of his children—she would, I think, draw him back, if you did not leave him first. But you would leave him first."

"I leave Pierre?" She almost laughed. He shrank from her, and the action maddened her. "Must we act a part for you forever," she said hotly—"you men who will not trouble to do it for us? It is

time you realized that women too are made of clay! are weak, are human——”

“We realized it all a long, long time ago,” said the Bishop. His voice had a faint tinge of weariness. He looked suddenly an old man. Five o’clock was booming from the church tower as he spoke, and both knew it meant victory for him. The Bishop reverently repeated the last words of the Westminster rhyme:

“‘So by Thy power
No foot shall slide.’”

Miss Rix raised her face from the arm against which it had fallen. “I can follow him,” she said.

The Bishop shook his head. “You will not follow him. You will be ashamed. In a little while, had you gone with him, you would have left him for the same reason. You have lived a good life for forty years. It is enough to spoil you forever for any peace or joy of heart in a life of sin.” She gasped a little at the words. “You have had all that was sweet, all that was satisfying, in that cup you blame me for striking from your lips. I will not let you drink the dregs. If you have no more regard for yourself, if you acknowledge no more duty to a world which has trusted you so implicitly that it was about to let you dash yourself to destruction, have you no pity for that poor young thing who never wronged you, whom you would rob behind her back of all a woman’s treasures? Oh,” with a sudden vehemence, “I had not thought of that before! I had only thought of you. The baseness of it, the cruelty! After illness and exile, neither of them through any fault of hers, to come home to hear of one child buried, the other stolen from her with her husband—how soon would you have found your heart’s desire fulfilled! for you have often wished her dead.”

“Oh!” at last covering her face with her hands. “You knew that!”

“I surmised that.”

“You knew everything,” she moaned, still with her hands before her face. She had now begun to excuse herself. “You kept silence. You did not help me. You did not reason with me. You did not stop me before. And now, when you see me humiliated into the dust, you speak like a Hebrew angel, not gently like a minister of Christ. You do not tell me——”

“I could tell you nothing,” he interrupted with steadfast sternness, “that you do not already know, and have not already set aside. So I used force.”

“Oh, how hard you are!” she murmured. “And how little you know! I struggled,” in a voice made faint by the remembrance of those struggles. “First I trusted to my own sense of honor. Then, when that was in vain, I trusted to Pierre’s. That was in vain too.” She knew she had known all along there is nothing to trust to in temptation

save flight; that an unyielding front has no comparison for safety with a retreating back.

"I am hard," repeated her old friend, "and I do not know. All the world is hard and does not know anything save the ultimate action. By it, not by intermediate steps, we are judged."

She turned on him with her last anger. "You talk of thinking only of me—you condemn only me. Why do you not speak this way to Pierre? Why must I, the woman, bear the brunt of it?"

"Pierre?" His uncle looked as though he had forgotten him. "He is practically in California now." She despairingly clenched her hands at the thought. "Men can take care of themselves, even their own souls. A woman never forgives one for taking care of hers at the wrong time; but that does not alter my duty. How could I think of anyone but the woman I have loved for so many years, and whose fall——" He could go no farther. He too raised his hand, fine and white as hers, to his face. Startling each of them, a deep groan came from his lips, and the frame which was steel a moment since trembled like a wisp of grass.

"I loved you," he said, turning to her in a sort of majesty of grief, "as you never loved that shallow soul you rebuked me for not rebuking, for I revered you, Caroline Rix. I looked through the little outer crust of harshness and saw, I thought,—ah, never matter what I thought I saw. I am more merciless, I know, than I thought it was in me to be; that too is a disappointment. Every light seems going out in sorrow and disappointment, save that of duty."

"You did not tell me," she said. So youth's patience was right, after all.

"No, you never encouraged me, and your father even less. I saw that you did not care, but as the years went on, and I cared still more, I thought I could perhaps make you care. Sometimes I came near speaking. Do you remember a day in my study, when you had the children in your lap and seemed more soft and gentle than usual, and I spoke of other fields than Africa? Some people came and interrupted me. Then there was a concert at the Settlement. You would not let me take you home, you remember?"

"Oh," she said, with the utmost difficulty, towering over him tall and pale and bitter, a figure not to be despised in the intensity of her misery, "how well it is that I should know this thing! It is very well ordered; nothing could so add the last stab of pain, to endure till my last hour of life. There is only one thing to be known that could humiliate me more, and I have kept that back."

"It is well ordered that you did that," said the Bishop. "It shows you have saved some self-respect." Hard, wholesome words, as they were, meant as they were to soothe, she started with a confused sense of

indignation, outrage, that they should be addressed to her. Then she remembered. She remembered too that she must remember all her life. She stood up, white and weak, with knees trembling under her. His second victory had come.

"Now that you have read the Bible at me, and preached at me, and taken the man I love from me," she said, "what are you going to do with me? That door is still locked." She realized that it would have to be opened for the congregation, who in a short time would be due for the six o'clock service—men and women she knew and must face at other times, if not now. An uncontrollable shudder passed over her. "Oh, what am I to do with myself?" she gasped. "You think I should repent; I cannot—I cannot afford the pain."

"That will come," said Bishop West.

"But, tell me," she said sharply. "How can I go back to a life that was intolerable before?"

"As we grow older," he said, not yet gently, "all life grows more and more bitter—and we more and more able to bear it. It would be more intolerable to go back, as must come sooner or later, after the final sin, the known disgrace." She had thought she would be a lady forever. How the cold words cut!

"But you will never think the same of me again."

"No."

Then there was a silence, broken by the sharp click of a key. Evidently the janitor had returned and was opening the door. Rapid, scrambling steps sounded in the vestibule and up the gallery stairs; the choir had come; the organist was even now beginning a plaintive prelude that she could not endure. And in a moment more the people, all liberated at once by the closing shops, began to stream in the door.

"Must I face them?" breathed Miss Rix.

Bishop West pushed her hastily into the archway leading into the vestry-room. In the light of the lamp that hung over it his face looked drawn and ghastly. There was other pain than hers in the world. But oh, she felt, no other loss so sweeping!

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee," said the Bishop unexpectedly. "'The Lord make His face to shine upon thee and give thee peace.'" It started her tears. She had never thought to hear him speak so again. He held her hand tightly for an instant, and in another instant had vanished to put on his vestments. Miss Rix pushed forward to leave the church, but could not; the side entrance had not been unlocked, and the people, surging in an unbroken line of humanity, pressed her back. She hastily pulled down her veil and shrank against the wall. Face after face which now would not look scorn on her passed by, in a blur—faces of young girls, weary-eyed already from toil, to whom her influence, her words, stood as a bulwark against a devour-

ing sea of temptation, a possible cup of strength in some great agony. They would have known by to-morrow,—if there had been a to-morrow. There would be none. O Pierre! no to-morrow! And heavy, tired, slouching men, stumbling their way, already sleepy at six o'clock—men who, however scanty their creed or great their shortcomings, had a dim recognition of a good woman's goodness, a relentless recognition of the reverse. Had there been a to-morrow, their lips, coarse and lax or thin and embittered, would have had for her words the Bishop could not speak, nor she imagine. O Pierre! O Danny, whose little soft cheek would never again rub against hers! They would have been true!

"Let us pray," said the Bishop abruptly, entering as the vestibule door closed on the last of the crowd. The organist, who had commenced the preliminary chords of a hymn, stopped with equal abruptness, in surprise. She could slip out now, and did so, but paused in the vestibule, arrested by the words, not of a familiar collect, but of a prayer she had not known was in the book. Not by the words only,—*"O blessed Lord, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort,"*—though they began like that one petition for which all heads will bow, that asks a life back from death (and she instinctively bent her own), but by the Bishop's tone. There was mortal agony of grief and pleading in it; all the thrill and tenderness, the compassion amid the blame, the solemn hope and healing mercy for which her bruised soul had groped. "We beseech Thee, look down in pity and compassion upon this Thy afflicted servant. Thou writest bitter things against her, and makest her to possess her former iniquities. Thy wrath lieth hard upon her," and the anguish of the same burden weighed down the supplicating voice, "and her soul is full of trouble."

The old unconscious habit asserted itself. Miss Rix knelt outside in the vestibule on the freezing marble, dropping burning, half-rebellious tears, which she wished there were some way of the Bishop's knowing were all for Pierre. Or nearly all. But he did not know, and marshalled the melting supplications one after another in majestic procession: "Give her a right understanding of herself"—did he know she was listening?—"and of Thy threats and promises, so that she may neither cast away her confidence in Thee, nor place it anywhere but in Thee. Give her strength against all her temptations, and heal all her distempers. Break not the bruised reed," it wept, "nor quench the smoking flax." A few inquiring heads near the door-way were raised, to see whence among them came the sudden, desperate, choking sob. "Shut not up Thy tender mercies in displeasure, but make her to hear of joy and gladness,"—these, ever again?—"that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice."

There were concluding words in the same solemn strain, but Miss Rix did not stay to hear them. She hurried out into the street, where

her tears seemed safer. There was but one place left her to go and weep them—the great barren house, stern and grim and ultimately sheltering as virtue itself, replete with memories which came in a rush at the mere thought of them, so poignant, so bitter with sweetness, that she groaned aloud while she resolutely turned her steps towards them. Repentance is as gradual in its processes as sin. The time would come, she knew, when she would open a disused book and search for that unfamiliar prayer. The time was even now come when her spirit sank back with a certain secret sense of relief into the old lines of forty years, and when she realized how she had feared the precipice from which she had been dragged away. But just now all she was distinctly conscious of was the wrench of the dragging, the voices which still lured from under the cliff. Desolation had come upon her suddenly.



AFTER THE SONG

(To E. J. W.)

BY ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON

I F to your wondrous voice and art
 I give not plaudits with the throng,
 'Tis lest I spill my brimming heart
 And in the singer lose the song.

Too soon the sweetest cadence dies,
 The vanished vision leaves but this:
 The burden of the things we prize,
 The pathos of the things we miss.

Oh, for a silence that should hold
 These echoes of delicious sound,
 As depths of a still lake enfold
 Brooks that fall fainter bound by bound.

Yours is the art of Orphic power
 To charm the soul from out its hell—
 Deserts of absence to reflower
 With rose instead of asphodel.

Like dew on gossamer, a tear
 Lies on the fabric of our dream:
 Despairing hope! that we who hear
 Might be as noble as you seem.

A JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

By Martha Wolfenstein

Author of "The Monk from the Ghetto," etc.



ONE fine day in spring young Stephan came tearing from town on horse-back, and burst into the farm-house kitchen crying desperately, "Uncle Pawel, Uncle Pawel, I'm undone! I must have a hundred gulden at once or be thrown into prison and left there to rot."

"One hundred gulden—whui!" cried Pawel Bauer. "It is all I have in the world, and my Anuschka's dowry at that. What mischief hast got into again?"

"So thou refusest?" cried Stephan.

"I need only twenty-five more, for Christoph says the day I lay him down one hundred and twenty-five he marries my Anuschka."

"Well, then, good-by, and say a mass for my soul," cried Stephan hotly, and made for the door.

"Wait, wait! Where goest in such a hurry?"

"To the devil! To throw myself into the well!"

"Wait, Stephanko, my boy," pleaded Pawel, clutching his nephew's coat-tails frantically. "How can I know thou'lt pay me back?"

"Nothing easier," said Stephan, instantly calm. "I simply write thee a note, promising to pay on such and such a day. 'Tis as good as gold."

In half an hour young Stephan, chirping like a bird, was tearing townward, and Pawel stood spelling over a large scrawl which read:

"I promise to pay one hundred gulden to Pawel Bauer
on St. Pagnoocious Day.

Signed, "STEPHAN STADTER, THE YOUNGER."

Pawel put the note into the stocking, empty of the best part of Anna's dowry, and each Sunday took down his calendar to see whether Pagnoocious were not due that week; but spring waxed into summer and summer waned into autumn, the harvest was in, and the twenty-five gulden necessary to the consummation of Anna's matrimonial hopes lay beside the note, but Pagnoocious had not yet arrived.

"Anuschka is not so young that she can wait," scolded Buzhinka, her mother.

"Perhaps I've skipped him," mused Pawel, scratching under his cap. "I'm not so strong on print as I used to be."

"I'll go ask the priest," he decided.

The priest did not take down his calendar, as Pawel expected, but after a single glance at the note threw himself into a chair, laughing uproariously.

"Pag-noo-oo-cious," he roared. "Ho, ho! a comical rogue! I don't wonder thou foundest him not in the calendar, truly; 'tis the first time I ever heard of the gentleman. By all the Saints, he has done thee, Pawel!"

Pawel looked blank.

"Thou hadst best consult a lawyer," advised the priest.

Advocate Hummel, grown old and wise in village practice, took the matter more gravely.

"Hm, the note is good," he said with fine logic, "but you cannot collect it. He promises to pay, but there is no Pagnocious."

"What's to be done? My Anushka's dowry!" lamented Pawel.

"My advice to you is to wait," said the lawyer, pocketing his fee. "Wait! Who knows, perhaps there may some day be such a saint?"

Pawel went home in despair. Buzhinka swore mighty oaths and Anna wept loudly into her apron.

It chanced that Anshel, the Jewish pedler, dropped in on his weekly rounds that day and heard the story sympathetically.

"I know someone can help thee, Pawel," he said. "Solomon Edelstein is his name, and he keeps a little wine-shop in our town, but he is a finished lawyer. A head on him—of iron, I tell thee. He has helped more than one out of a pickle."

Next day Pawel appeared with his friend Anshel before Solomon Edelstein, who, much to Pawel's astonishment, neither laughed at the note nor looked grave, but after a careless glance into it laid it indifferently aside and continued his reading in a large yellow-leaved book.

Pawel's hope sank like lead, but presently old Solomon raised his eyebrows wearily, drooped his head meekly to one side, and said in a small, sad voice,—

"On the first of November you'll get your money."

"How so on the first?" questioned Pawel dubiously.

Solomon did not reply. He was bending over his book again, intently reading.

"If the egg was laid on a Sabbath," he murmured musically, his thumb wagging an active accompaniment, and Anshel with a knowing shrug took Pawel away.

The following week Pawel and old Solomon appeared at court,

where young Stephan had been summoned for non-payment of his note.

"I do not refuse to pay," cried Stephan, smirking confidently. "As you see in the note, I promise."

"Fool," growled the Judge. "Pagnoocious. You can't collect on that. The note is no good. The case is dismissed."

"Pardon me," piped a small, sad voice, and all eyes turned to where little Solomon stood with his head drooping meekly to one side. "Pardon me, Herr Richter. He must pay. The note is good. The note is very good."

"So! Do *you* perhaps know when is St. Pagnoocious?" barked the Judge.

"Why should I not know?" answered Solomon. "It is the day after to-morrow."

"What? How? What do you mean?"

"Is not the day after to-morrow All Saints' Day? Nu, if it is *all* Saints' Day, Pagnoocious must also be among them."

And they bought the raisins for Anushka's wedding-cake that very day.



TO A BUTTERFLY IN THE CITY

BY HARVEY MAITLAND WATTS

A DOWN the blistering lanes of sculptured stone,
 Whose towering fronts mark out the Midas bowers,
 Through sun-baked highways in the noontide hours,
 O'er glare of pave where jostling thousands groan
 For silent stretch of woodland shade, alone,
 Or quietude of nook where brooklets sing,
 Thou flutterest, beauteous, on inconstant wing,
 Whilst commerce rales in hoarse, unchanging drone.

O, lost on Trade's uncouth, far-reaching strand—
 That knows not banks a-flower, nor ripened bough,
 Nor wind-blown reach where all is fair and free—
 Bright symbol of the poet's thoughts art thou,
 Bearing to men engrossed in merchantry
 Enchanting hint of far Elysian land.

TWO FOR PEACE

By *Mary E. Wilkins*

Author of "A Humble Romance," "A New England Nun," "Pembroke," etc.



THE sun was low and the tide was on the ebb. The harbor was like a lake of mother-of-pearl, and some white gulls were in cry over it. The rocks near the shore appeared above the water like ledges of red gold. All the wind was from the land, and the breaths of dying sumach and asters and golden-rod were in it.

The old Williams house was on the steep, dusty incline of the village street, frowning austere upon it with glimmering green lights of ancient windows under deep cornices wrought with the utmost conscientiousness of elaboration of some old Puritan joiner. The house stood very close to the street, the door-step plumb with the narrow sidewalk. The front door, topped with blue, squinting bulls'-eyes, was open, and the long hall leading straight through to the rear door was visible. Down this hall came Elizabeth Williams, the ninth descendant of Puritans, to greet Ferdinand Dudley, who was also the ninth descendant of Puritans upon one side, and upon the other of a widely different stock: of a fine and proud old Spanish family, which had settled in a colonial island of the West Indies early in the century. Only the South Europe strain was visible in the young man. Those sombre black eyes of his had glances at sharp right angles with those of the villagers of unmixed blood. He was suspected of Catholic leanings, which caused some of the village folk to eye him askance, though many of them had forsaken their Calvinistic tenets for the pleasanter and easier ones of Unitarianism, and danced where their ancestors had knelt for strength against the wiles of the devil and for the punishment of their enemies. Ferdinand danced with the rest, but he did not attend the Unitarian church or any other. People opined that he would go to the Roman Catholic, though it had fallen from its high estate in this little New England village, and its congregation was composed of servant-girls and factory operatives, had it not been for his paternal grandmother, old Madam Dudley. She was as proud as any of his Spanish ancestors, and would have frowned on the worshippers, if not on the worship. However, it was well known that he kept a rosary in his chamber, and said his prayers upon it, and the people, who were still stiff with the spiritual starch of Puritanism, though the later suns and rains had

caused them to wilt in some directions, did not approve. Always a slight shadow of disapproval, like the dawn of an eclipse, rested upon Ferdinand, though he was young and handsome, and his rich old grandmother's only heir. Elizabeth Williams was influenced by none of these considerations for or against, and no one knew why she had held aloof from his proudly ardent advances for so many years. She was twenty-six years old, and many considered her not so pretty as she had been, but Ferdinand never looked with longing eyes at another girl. He never wore his heart upon his sleeve, nor was servile in his wooing,—that was not in his blood,—but he was always warmly attentive when in the least encouraged, and gravely and coldly unobtrusive when repulsed, which was often. It was now three weeks since Ferdinand had been at the Williams house. During his last call he had not seen Elizabeth at all; she had been excused by one of the nervously deprecatory maiden aunts with whom she lived. "My niece is feeling somewhat indisposed and begs to be excused," said her Aunt Pamela. Ferdinand made his call, and treated Miss Pamela with every whit as much deference and gallant attention as he would have shown towards her niece. When he left, Pamela told privately her sister Roxana that she wondered why Elizabeth was so loth to marry Ferdinand Dudley, for she considered him a most estimable young man, and the match was an advantageous one, if she must needs wed at all. Roxana, who was of a softer nature than her sister and had had a love affair in her youth, said that she could account for it in no way except by a prior attachment.

"Prior attachment!" cried Miss Pamela. "Who could it possibly be?"

Roxana admitted that she could not imagine, and Pamela shook her head decidedly. "It would be impossible for her to set her affections upon anyone to that extent, and we not be able to imagine whom," said she.

When Ferdinand rang the door-bell that night, Elizabeth would have escaped by the path leading over the bank to the beach, had she not been at once too courteous and too proud.

The one servant-woman was not in the house; there was nothing for her to do but to go to the door, greet Ferdinand hospitably, and invite him to enter. Elizabeth was a tall, pale girl, with brown hair folded softly and plainly back from a high, white forehead; her expression would have been gentle, had it not been for its underlaying of staidness and reserve, which gave an effect of severity. The principle of sexual selection of Ferdinand's paternal family must have been predominant within him, for him to have chosen this typical daughter of Puritans. They stood before each other, a strangely matched pair, as far as personal appearance went: she tall and severely fair, clad like

one of her ancestresses in a straight gown of Puritan gray, he small with a sinewy lightness of figure, his dark face tense with restrained impulses, and the touch of southern taste in the red of his necktie and the band of his wide hat.

His grave face sweetened and brightened like a child's when Elizabeth spoke to him. "I was strolling this way, and I ventured to call," he said, and his voice was very gentle, almost appealing.

Elizabeth smiled. "Pray come in," she said, and led the way through the hall to the rear porch, where she had been sitting. He would not have a chair, and seated himself on the step at her feet, but looked away from her, turning his face towards the sea. Then the two conversed about the sunset and the beauty of the colors upon land and sea and sky. If either had a vein of poetry and an original interpretation of the scene before them, neither had the spontaneousness of temperament to mention it to the other. They called attention to this green streak on the sea, and that rosy cloud in the sky, and the purple gleam of the sea-weed through the shoal water; and the sun sank lower and the stars came out.

Elizabeth's parents were dead, and she lived with her old maiden aunts, Pamela and Roxana. They had been sitting upon the porch all the afternoon with their needle-work and their knitting, both of which still lay on a chair, the one in a basket, the other in a silken bag. While the niece Elizabeth sat on the porch conversing about the glories of the sunset with her admirer, the two old aunts were peeping furtively from an upper window, and listening to ascertain when the caller should be gone that they might descend for their belongings. Roxana had had a slight headache, and she and Pamela had gone to their chamber, taken off their black-silk afternoon gowns, donned the comfortable old chintz bedgowns in the fashion of a generation back, and settled down for a peaceful evening with needlework and knitting, to discover that both had been left upon the porch with an insuperable obstacle to their recovery until the caller should be gone. Pamela's work was an under-petticoat of fine flannel, which she was embroidering by hand after the fashion of her girlhood, and Roxana's was a white garter after an obsolete style which she still affected, knitted in a long strip and wound many times around her slender knees to hold in their places her fine white hose with their silken clocks.

"I would not care, sister, if the work were anything else," said Roxana, "but I fear that it would be almost indelicate to go down for that, when our niece is sitting with a young gentleman."

"Perhaps it would be, Roxana," assented Pamela.

"It would not matter so much if he might not be led to think that the articles belonged to Elizabeth," said Roxana. "That would no doubt mortify her very much."

Therefore the two old sisters, with their scruples of an antiquated and overstrained modesty, remained in their upper chamber, peeping and listening for Ferdinand Dudley to take his leave, thrusting their delicately capped old heads cautiously out of the window, and reporting in fine, sibilant whispers.

The young man stayed, and the conversation flowed easily and superficially on, until suddenly the fierce undercurrent broke through the surface froth of it, and Ferdinand with a desperate motion was on his knees before Elizabeth. "Oh Elizabeth, I love you so, I love you so!" he stammered out.

Elizabeth, who had been speaking quite gayly, seemed to turn pale and cold and still, all in a moment.

"I love you so," Ferdinand repeated, almost sobbing, and his voice, as was always the case when he was under strong excitement, had the accent of his Spanish mother. His face too was fairly feminine in the sweetness of its pleading as he raised it to Elizabeth.

She shrank away from him. "You must not talk to me in this way," she said. "You know I have tried not to let you talk to me in this way."

"Oh, I know that," returned Ferdinand piteously; "I know that. You have not let me make any mistake. I knew you did not want me to speak, but I could not help it. Oh Elizabeth, I love you so."

"Hush," said Elizabeth, "there is no use. You know it well enough."

The young man had seized her hand and was covering it with kisses. "I know nothing except that I love you," he said.

"You make me very unhappy," Elizabeth returned coldly, trying to draw her hand away.

Then suddenly Ferdinand released her hand, and sprang to his feet, and stood before her fairly panting with eagerness, his black eyes glowing.

"I shall make you happy; you shall love me back," he cried; "such love as mine is for you must win love in return. It makes you mine, Elizabeth; you must love me, you cannot escape me!"

Elizabeth rose also and looked at him proudly.

"We have had enough of this," said she; "I must beg you to excuse me, Mr. Dudley."

But Ferdinand stood before her. "No, hear me; you must hear me," he urged hotly. "Why don't you love me? What is there in me that you do not like? You owe it to me at least to tell me that."

"I tell you there is nothing that I dislike, that I can give you as a reason for not loving you," Elizabeth replied impatiently. "Let me go, Mr. Dudley."

But Ferdinand did not move. "Then, if that is the case, you will

love me," he declared confidently. "If there is no fault in the soil and the light, the plant has to grow. I can wait, dear."

"And I tell you there is no use in your waiting," Elizabeth cried indignantly. Then she added, stung into cruelty by this persistent wooing, "If you wait forever you will never be any nearer me. I can never love you as long as I live."

Ferdinand's eyes blazed back at hers, and a fierceness sharpened through his manner as the claws of a cat sharpen through the softness of her fur.

"And I say you shall," he answered back defiantly, "unless——" He hesitated a second—"Unless you love somebody else," he said then with a gasp.

"Then I will tell you once for all," answered Elizabeth, "I do love somebody else."

Ferdinand's manner changed suddenly, all his eagerness vanished. When he spoke his voice grated like the keel of a boat upon ice, in spite of his effort to control it. "Who is he?" he asked.

"I am not ready to make that public," Elizabeth replied shortly.

"Where is he?" demanded Ferdinand, still in that grating voice, and the girl looked at him in sudden alarm.

"That also I am not prepared to tell," said she with dignity, but her eyes were anxious.

"Oh, well, never mind," returned Ferdinand. Then suddenly he laughed in his usual manner and threw himself down in his old place on the porch-step.

"Of course, that settles it," he said easily; "nothing more need be said. Come, Elizabeth, sit down again, and don't make me cut my call short, for I don't know what to do with myself when I get home. Let us talk on another subject."

Elizabeth hesitated, looking at him doubtfully. She did not understand this at all, not knowing that this was the way, inherited from his New England father, of manifesting the pride inherited from his Spanish mother. There was an incongruity, as of opposing natures, in it which shocked her vaguely. Had he stalked off in gloomy dudgeon, she would not have been so alarmed or disturbed.

"Oh, sit down," he said with another laugh. "Of course, had I known that I was poaching on another man's preserves, I would have said nothing, but I never dreamed—I never knew you to encourage any man more than you encouraged me."

Elizabeth seated herself, still hesitatingly; she felt that it would be ungenerous and discourteous to do anything else, and yet her whole soul was awake with alarm and impatience. Ferdinand lighted a fresh cigar, shielding it carefully from the wind. Elizabeth breathed more easily when he did that; it always seemed to her to mark a masculine

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lapse into former conditions. Still, he did not quit the subject when he spoke again, though it was between luxurious puffs of smoke, and with a kind of nonchalant reflectiveness. "I must say I did not dream of any other man here whom you would be likely to favor," said he, and he looked as if all his possible rivals were drawn up before his mental vision. Elizabeth flushed angrily and made a motion to arise.

Ferdinand thrust out a hand, seized the hem of her gray gown, and pulled her gently down. "Oh, don't be angry," he pleaded, laughing, "don't go. I won't speak of the subject again. I would not have then, only I wondered——" In spite of himself his voice grated, and Elizabeth started.

"He is not here," she said unguardedly with a quick impulse.

"Oh, well," returned Ferdinand easily, "I am glad to know that none of my fellow-townsmen are preferred before me, at any rate. See that cross-current of silver in the sea."

The moon was up and the night was clear, yet with no breath of frost in it. The two sat there, keeping up their surface conversation, hiding, as it were, the depths underneath by a smooth shimmer of reflection of ordinary life. The two old sisters in the chamber overhead were still peering and listening for Ferdinand to leave that they might get their work. "He's lit another cigar," Sister Roxana said mournfully, drawing in her head from the window.

"I am afraid he has," assented Pamela.

"I doubt if so many cigars are good for young men," said Roxana.

It was after ten o'clock when Ferdinand rose to take leave. He talked quite gayly and naturally to the last, and just as he was traversing the long hall he volunteered a piece of news.

"By the way," said he, "have you heard of the marriage of my old friend, Anston Millet?"

"No," replied Elizabeth.

"Well, I understand it came off last week. He married a Boston girl. Someone told me so on the train to-day, the first I had heard of it, though I used to see a good deal of him at one time. I suppose you don't remember Anston Millet. He cannot have been here much since you were a child."

"I have seen him since I was eighteen, and I remember him quite well," said Elizabeth. "Good-night, Mr. Dudley."

When the door was shut behind Ferdinand Dudley Elizabeth leaned against the old panels. She had seen Anston Millet many times during the last eight years, when she had been staying in Boston. She had promised to marry him when his fortunes should be bettered, keeping the engagement a secret until then. She had carried on a correspondence with him until the last year, when she had neither seen nor heard anything of him, and had torn her heart with vain watching,

though nobody had suspected. Elizabeth realized at this first unveiling of her woe to her own eyes that she would have gone mad had she known that others as well as herself would see it in all its hideousness. The very nudity of the soul is exposed when its farthest grief is patent to the world, and it is something for a proud and sensitive soul to have its own private corner of suffering.

Elizabeth was still leaning against the door-panel when she heard a softly shuffling step and the trail of draperies on the stair, then the gleam of a candle crossed the hall. She straightened herself as her Aunt Roxana came down the stairs, holding a little checkered shawl tightly across her slender shoulders, elevating her wavering candle to light her careful steps.

"Has he gone?" she whispered as she reached the foot of the stairs.

"Yes, Aunt Roxana."

"I wanted my knitting-work, and sister wanted her sewing, and we did not like to come down and get them before him," said Roxana, with an accent of the gentlest and most resigned injury.

"I am sorry that you have waited so long," returned Elizabeth, and she went quickly out on the porch and brought the knitting and needle-work to her aunt.

"Thank you, my dear," said Roxana. "We feared that it would not be quite delicate for us to come for them while your caller was there."

"He would not have noticed," Elizabeth replied absently.

"Your Aunt Pamela and I feared that he might. We do not think that the young man ought to smoke quite so many cigars, my dear."

"I am sure that he smokes too many," said Pamela's more decided voice from the head of the stairs, her face also lighted by a streaming candle.

"I daresay he does," assented Elizabeth.

She went about locking the house for the night. The old sisters remained up until after midnight pursuing their interrupted work, though they did not wish their niece to know it. Elizabeth's attitude towards her aunts was one of young authority and protection, to which they outwardly deferred, but it was always inwardly disregarded. The old servant-woman was entirely on their side, and the spirit of aged negation was stronger in the house than that of youthful assertion. The old sisters sat up and worked, and in that way knew that their niece's lamp burned late. They speculated as to whether she might be ill or not, and looked at her with mild curiosity when she appeared at the breakfast-table. There was between the members of this feminine household a singular and impalpable wall of division, due not so much to lack of sympathy as difference of kind. On the one side were the

two old sisters and the old servant cloaked with the secrecy of age, and on the other was the girl cloaked with the secrecy of youth. Each was insensibly arrayed against the other, though there was no lack of interest and even affection.

Roxana and Pamela would have said, "Were you ill last night, dear, that you kept your lamp burning so late?" had they not had their own midnight oil to cover. However, Elizabeth did not look in the least ill; she carried her fair head with a prouder mildness than ever, and there was even a flush of red on her cheeks. She was gayer than usual too, and told of her own accord about Anston Millet's marriage. The old sisters were directly interested and had many questions to ask. Elizabeth said she thought the bride must be pretty and of a good family, as Anston Millet had always struck her as being somewhat fastidious.

"You did not know him very well, did you, my dear?" said Pamela.

"He has been here so little since his boyhood," said Roxana.

"I saw something of him when I was in Boston," Elizabeth said simply.

Elizabeth that day was utterly single-minded. She was conscious of only one supporting column of her whole structure, mental and physical, and that was secrecy. She felt that if anyone were to discover what was in her mind, if even she were to discover it fully herself, she would fall in a collapse of utter destruction. She felt that she could bear anything except that: that other people should see her bearing it, and that she should fairly realize the magnitude of her own burden. Every animal is provided by Providence with its own involuntary concealment, like a shell, which is sometimes of such thickness that it can hide therein from itself. Elizabeth that day, when she had braided her hair before her looking-glass, baffled in a sense the laws of light, and produced no true reflection.

After dinner she put on her best visiting-dress, a gray silk, and her gray hat with a wreath of violets, and told her aunts that she was going to call at Madam Dudley's. "I may stay to tea," said she; "she has asked me to so many times."

Elizabeth's face blazed softly under the quick glances which her aunts gave her, though she felt all the time as if she were looking at them through her impenetrable veil of self-concealment.

"There is something serious between that young man and Elizabeth," Pamela said decidedly after the girl had gone.

"She should tell us so, should she not, if that is the case?" said Roxana. "I can hardly believe it, sister."

"The dear child's only fault is her secretiveness; she is like her mother, who was otherwise quite a faultless woman, in that respect," said Pamela.

"If matters are not quite settled, it seems to me that it is somewhat

indelicate for her to go to take tea with Madam Dudley without an invitation," said Roxana reflectively.

"It is certainly indecorous according to our bringing up," replied Pamela; "but if dear Elizabeth does not confide in us, we cannot advise her, and she is no longer a child. You and I had put all thoughts of lovers away when we were not much older than she."

Roxana colored a little and did not reply.

Elizabeth Williams, holding up her gray skirt out of the dust, went down the village street to Madam Dudley's old mansion-house, a half-mile below. It stood well back from the street, elevated upon terraces. Madam Dudley was knitting at one of her front windows, and saw Elizabeth coming up the stone steps over the terraces. She did not wait for her to ring, but went to the door herself to greet her.

"My dear child," she said with a soft stateliness of manner not unlike Elizabeth's, and bent to kiss her. Madam Dudley was a very large woman, large rather than stout, and had been a great beauty in her day. She was handsome now, in her fine sable cashmeres and laces, with her crown of silver braids and her long-fingered hands covered with diamonds giving out dead-white lights from their ancient settings.

"My dear child," she repeated, and Elizabeth knew that Ferdinand could not have told his grandmother of his repulse of the night before. Madam Dudley's heart had long been set upon the match, and she had made no secret of it, striving with her elderly dogmatism, which held both parties as children with issues as of dolls and doll-houses, to bring it about. She was as fond of the girl in her own way as was her grandson. She looked at her even dotingly when her hat and cape were removed, and she was seated with her in the great old-fashioned room.

"You are more charming than ever, my dear," said she, and there was an inflection in her voice like her grandson's.

Elizabeth blushed. "You are kind to think so," she replied.

"My dear, I am not the only one," said Madam Dudley.

The girl's face was suffused with pink as the old woman surveyed it with an insistence which had something masculine in it. She reasoned within herself that something must have been definitely settled between Elizabeth and her grandson. She knew that he had called upon her the night before. "This is a plan between them to surprise and please me," she thought. "When Ferdinand comes home they will announce the engagement."

About four o'clock, when she saw her grandson coming up the street, she made an errand and withdrew herself from the room. She met her grandson in the front hall, and her face was foolishly fond, and eager as a child's. She took him by the arm and pushed him

softly towards the parlor-door, and flushed pink, and laughed at his astonished gaze.

"Who is it, grandmother?" Ferdinand asked, wondering and half-unwilling to enter.

"Go in and see," whispered she.

Ferdinand opened the parlor-door, thinking that his grandmother was growing childish, and Elizabeth Williams rose and came forward to meet him.

Ferdinand gave a great start and stood staring at her. Taking into consideration the girl's character, there was only one interpretation that could be placed upon it all. Elizabeth held out her hand to him.

Her face was very pale, and she spoke in a low voice, which gave an impression of timidity and even shame, though it was firm enough. "I want to inquire," said she, "if you are still of the same mind as last night."

"Of course I am. Do you think a man changes about a thing of that kind in a day?" replied Ferdinand, but he looked strangely at her.

"Then," said Elizabeth, "I would like to withdraw the answer which I gave. I would like—to give the opposite."

Elizabeth turned her head away when she had said that, and stood still. Ferdinand drew a gasping breath, but made no motion towards her. It was only a second, but it was enough to fire Elizabeth's pride. She faced him suddenly. "If you have changed your mind a hair's breadth, mine is the same as it was last night," she cried out. Then Ferdinand stepped forward and took her in his arms. "It was only because I was so bewildered, sweetheart," said he. "God knows my mind is as fixed as the stars, and if you are willing to try, I know I can teach you to love me better than that other man."

Presently Madam Dudley came in, shrinking as timidly in the door-way as if she had her own young love-secret to uncover, and Ferdinand led Elizabeth forward to greet her. "She has promised to marry me, grandmother," he said simply. He was flushed and triumphant, yet not altogether joyful. The old woman, however, almost lost her dignity in her exuberance of delight. Elizabeth, though she was touched, looked at her with that surprise of youth, whose own interests seem to form an innermost axis of motion for creation, that she should be so moved by something which was, after all, distinctly outside her own small remnant of life. She wept, and kissed her grandson and the girl over and over. Finally she brought out an ancient pearl ring and put it on Elizabeth's finger. "There," said she, "Ferdinand's grandfather gave it to me before I was married, and I have not worn it for forty years; my finger grew too large. You must wear it now. Fer-

dinand can give you another ring, but you must wear this from his old grandmother as well."

After tea, when Elizabeth went home leaning on her accepted lover's arm, she caught herself wondering that people whom they met recognized her and bowed to her, she seemed so strange to her own thoughts, and her impression of her own cloak and masking veil of secrecy so grew upon her.

When the two were nearly home they met Laura Pearson, Elizabeth's friend, a swift-stepping, erect girl, with her young husband, to whom she had been married only since spring. The next day Laura came to call,—the news of Elizabeth's engagement was already well spread over the village.

"Only think," said Laura, laughing, after she had kissed Elizabeth and wished her in a fervent voice as happy a married life as her own, "I thought—well, I believe I will tell you what I thought, it is so ridiculous, and it can do no harm now. You know how intimate you and Anston Millet were in Boston. Oh, you thought I did not know. My dear, those things are always sung on every bush. George's cousin is Fanny Andrews that was, and she met last year, down at Old Point, your Cousin Emmeline's dearest friend, whom you never saw, because she was married and had gone away before you went to Boston to visit, but Emmeline had told her the whole. So, you see, when I heard of Anston Millet's marriage I made up my mind not to speak of it, thinking you might be hit; but when I met you and Ferdinand last night I told George I guessed there was no occasion for worry. I always thought you could take care of yourself, dear."

Elizabeth laughed. "Yes, I think I can," she said.

"Of course, I know how ridiculous it was for me to think of such a thing for a minute," said Laura Pearson, "but Anston Millet had always the reputation of a lady-killer, you know, and you always refused all your offers, and so—— Of course, he was not half good enough for you, and neither is Ferdinand, for that matter, though I have always liked him, and fancied him all the more for that mixture of alien blood. I think you will find it rather amusing, and tending to vary the monotony. Now I can always tell exactly what George will do, and it is never exciting, though I am perfectly happy. I do hope you will know what it is to be so perfectly happy, dear."

After her friend had gone Elizabeth sat down to realize that even her little comforting cloak of secrecy would have been stripped from her, and she been exposed in the full glare of day to the pitying scrutiny of all her friends, had she not engaged herself to Ferdinand Dudley. After that, while admitting her baseness, she would have fought for it, and after that, curiously enough, she began to love Ferdinand, though she did not fairly know it.

The engagement was to be a short one; the two were to be married before Christmas and go to live with Madam Dudley in the old Dudley mansion. Elizabeth had hesitated about leaving her aunts; she had a strong feeling of duty towards them with no small affection, but they did not seem at all disturbed at the prospect.

"We want you to be happy, my dear," said Pamela, "and the Dudley house is larger than this; then there are two of us, and there is only one there. It would leave Madam Dudley quite alone. Besides, Madam Dudley is accustomed to having a man in the house, and we are not. It would perhaps disturb her not to have him, and it would be quite an undertaking for your Aunt Roxana and me at our ages."

"Your Aunt Pamela and I will get along very comfortably with Margaret," said Roxana with thinly veiled eagerness, "but we want you to consult your own happiness, my dear."

There was to be an elaborate wedding in the old Congregational church which Madam Dudley had always attended. A great many invitations were issued. Ferdinand wished one to be sent to Anston Millet, and Elizabeth directed the envelope with her own hand. Elizabeth was to be married in her mother's and her grandmother's wedding-dress and veil; she was to have bridesmaids; there was to be a large reception. Elizabeth had seemed strangely anxious for display, and they who knew her best wondered.

"It is not a bit like her," said Laura Pearson, "but you can never tell what people will do on such occasions, especially when they have always been a little eccentric. Elizabeth, fond as I am of her, has always seemed a little unlike the other girls; one could never quite tell if she was not keeping something back, and one could not always count on what she would do, although she has no alien blood, like poor Ferdinand. I should not be surprised at anything in either of them, if neither of them came to be married, or only one."

"You ought not to say anything like that, my dear," said her husband, around whose masculine imperturbability his wife's fancy played like wildfire, sometimes to its actual shaking.

"Oh, it is nothing against them, it only makes them more interesting," said Laura easily. "Now, you are scarcely interesting at all, you are so readily calculated. Comets were always more appealing to me than fixed stars."

"I don't believe you would like a comet for a husband in the long run," said George with perfect good-humor.

Laura and her husband had been assisting to decorate the church for Elizabeth's wedding, mostly with holly and evergreen, because there was nothing else in season. "It seems more like a Christmas-tree than a wedding," Laura said. "People have no right to get married at this time of year, unless they are multi-millionaires, and can afford roses for everything."

However, there were plenty of roses around the pulpit and the space where the bridal couple were to stand, and the Williams house was redolent with them. Everything was in readiness, and it was the night before the wedding. Elizabeth's wedding-dress lay beautifully spread out, like a gorgeous plume of ivory satin and old lace, on the bed of the north guest-chamber. There had been a last rehearsal at the church. Ferdinand had taken Elizabeth home, and after a brief sitting in the parlor had bidden her good-night.

After he had gone Elizabeth went out on the back porch overlooking the sea to get a breath of fresh air. The day had been one of those unseasonably warm ones which sometimes come in December. A thick fog like wool was over the sea, which could not be seen at all, and was evident only through its soft break upon the stones of the beach below. It was high tide. A full moon penetrated the mist with a feeble effulgence of pale light, and the atmosphere was ghostly and unreal in effect. Elizabeth stood looking out at it all, and was conscious of no thought about it, nor any reflections upon herself, and the change in her estate to come so soon. She felt as if she were past thinking, as if she had become so much a part of action that there was no foothold outside for her to gaze and dwell upon it. She had arrived at that stage when one's emotions blot out temporarily their own existence. She looked at the white folding and wavering of the fog, and the watery moon-beams struggling through, and had no consciousness of that or herself, or Ferdinand or the other man, and then suddenly she saw a glimmer of light down on the beach, where nobody walked as a general thing on account of the stones, and least of all at this time of night. It was just a point of light, the fiery tip of a cigar in somebody's mouth. She looked at it idly enough, then suddenly saw another behind the first. Then the first disappeared, but the smoke of it came in her face. Then there was a little shower of sparks on the edge of the bank in front of the porch as the cigar was thrown away, and the man stepped up beside her. It was Anston Millet; she knew him in an instant.

"Don't be frightened," he said. "Don't you know me?"

"I am not frightened at all, and I know you perfectly," said Elizabeth. "What are you here for?" She spoke quite slowly and distinctly, but her voice was strange to her own ears.

"I heard you were to be married to-morrow, and——"

"What is that to you?"

"What is that to me? Everything. Oh my God, Elizabeth, don't you know what it is to me?"

"What right have you to come talking to me like this? Are you not married yourself?"

"Married, no! Elizabeth, you did not believe that?"

"Why should I not have believed it? How long is it since I have heard from you?"

"I have loved you all the time, if I have not written to you. Elizabeth——"

"That is enough," said Elizabeth sternly, and made a motion to go, but he caught her.

"Hear me for the last time; let me explain. You don't know all the circumstances," he pleaded hoarsely.

"Release me this minute! How dare you?"

"Oh, my darling, have patience a moment. I love no one but you; I have loved no one but you all the time."

"The more shame to you then; let me go!"

But Anston Millet was kissing her, holding her to him with all his strength, and she struggled like a wild thing. It seemed to her, in this unwonted fire of her Puritan blood, that she could kill him.

Then all at once there was someone else. Millet was seized in a nervous grasp and thrown back, and she was free. "Go into the house," said Ferdinand to her. He could hardly speak. The light shone from a window full on his face. Millet stood motionless, as if he were waiting.

"Don't," gasped Elizabeth faintly. "Don't!"

"Go into the house," repeated Ferdinand.

Then she obeyed and went in. She went up to her own room and knelt down beside her bed, and suddenly it came to her how she loved Ferdinand. She had thought Millet married all this time, and she was one of the women for whom the marriage of a lover establishes an invincible barrier even to thought or imagination. Millet had seemed strange to her, his voice had come as across untold distances of separation. She could never have felt such anger towards him of old. But she loved Ferdinand. A wounded heart, like any other wounded thing, may grow to another the more quickly and insensibly because of the wound, and hers had grown to her new lover's.

Elizabeth sprang up with only one idea in her mind: she must hasten and stop what might be going on between those two men down on the beach before it was too late.

She ran downstairs as noiselessly as she could, but both her aunts were at the foot, pale and peering.

"Pamela thought she heard somebody cry out down on the beach," said Roxana, trembling. "I am afraid it is a wreck, my dear, and somebody is drowned."

"I am sure I heard something," Pamela said firmly.

The two old women in their chintz bedgowns wavered back and forth in the light of their flickering candles as uncertainly as their own shadows.

"Suppose we send Margaret for help?" said Roxana in her weak quaver.

"That is what we must do," said Pamela.

"You must not, Aunt Pamela," said Elizabeth; "you must not send anybody."

"I am not sure——" began Roxana.

"I tell you, keep still, both of you!" cried Elizabeth in a harsh, deep voice, like a man's. Then she was past them and out of the house, and struggling down the tangled bank to the beach, with the shrill remonstrances of the two old sisters ringing in her ears.

It was as still as a tomb except for the break of the waves. Elizabeth groped her way along through the white smother of the fog. She dared not call to Ferdinand for fear of betraying him to her aunts listening on the bank. One thing was very clear to her mind: if Ferdinand should kill Anston Millet she must not betray him,—she must save him at all cost.

She stepped high and cautiously, having a feeling that she might at any minute touch something or hear something which should confirm her fears. The beach was covered with irregular stones; it was difficult to progress with any speed. Only men rendered headstrong and reckless by passion could have gone very far in the short time since they had left her. She stopped often and listened, then struggled on. The fog had increased. She was blinded and half-smothered under its soft massiveness, as under a mighty brooding of feathers. The smell of the sea was strong in her nostrils, and she felt heavy drops as of lead on her hair.

At last she leaned against the side of a great rock and listened with all her might. It seemed to her that she did hear something far away on the beach, a clatter as of feet among the loose stones, and she ventured to call out softly, "Ferdinand! Ferdinand!"

Then she hushed with a qualm of terror, for she was sure that she heard oars. Then she was not so sure, still she dared not call again. She became certain that Ferdinand had killed Anston Millet. She waited, thinking that he might come running back to her, and she might help him to escape. That was all she hoped for. She dared not call again, ever so faintly. She kept hearing oars, then thinking that she was mistaken.

Finally she went back to the house, crawling over the stones and up the bank, as if she were very old.

Her aunts were watching for her, their pale faces flattened against a seaward window-pane. The old servant-woman was at another.

Pamela caught her niece by an arm and held her in a nervous grip. "Where have you been? What did you see?" she gasped.

"Oh, where have you been, my dear?" quavered Roxana.

"You are drenched; your gown is drenched. Did you see anything out there?" questioned Pamela with something of sharpness.

"Only some men in a boat; I think there were some men in a boat," replied Elizabeth in her harsh, unexpectedly deep voice. "Let me go, Aunt Pamela, I want to take off my wet dress."

Elizabeth went upstairs, and the three old women stood gazing after her. Presently they followed, groping along with their streaming candles, and clinging to the banisters. "Oh sister, are you sure you heard a noise?" asked Roxana.

"I am sure of it," replied Pamela.

"Oh dear, sister, what do you think it was?"

"I do not know; it was nothing that concerned us," said Pamela, "but I am sure that I heard a noise."

The next morning the preparations for the wedding went on, and there was no disturbance until nearly noon. Then Madam Dudley sent over to ascertain if Elizabeth had seen anything of Ferdinand. He had not come down to breakfast, and when, at last, becoming alarmed, they had gone to his room, he was not there. Had he been over to see her that morning? Elizabeth sent back word that she had not seen Ferdinand that morning, but that he might have taken an early train to the city, and stolen out of the house without awakening anyone. She had, in fact, heard him say, and so had his grandmother, that he might be obliged to take a hurried trip to the city that morning, and that gave color to what she said. But she knew that he would not come, and she knew when later in the day she arrayed herself in her bridal finery that it was all a mockery, that there would be no bridegroom and no bride.

At last, when it was as evident to everyone as to herself, when the wedding-guests had gone home and the lights were put out in the church, and Elizabeth in her wedding attire was with her old aunts, Madam Dudley, the bridesmaids, and the minister, no one suspected that she was not surprised, though she was the calmest of them all. Madam Dudley did not weep or lament, but her lips trembled strangely when she strove to give directions. She refused the minister's arm proudly, but she fell rather than sat in her chair. "My grandson has undoubtedly met with foul play," she said with her thick tongue.

Presently Elizabeth took off her wedding-gown and veil. She refused Laura Pearson's offer of assistance. Laura was dressed in her own wedding-gown, and her eyes were red with weeping. "I told George once I should not be surprised if Ferdinand did not come to the wedding," she whispered to one of the prospective bridesmaids. "It gives me an awful feeling to remember it. It seems prophetic."

The girl looked at her with awed eyes; her pretty face was quite pale under her fluff of fair hair. She had a lover, and was imagining

what she should do if he were to treat her as Ferdinand had treated Elizabeth. Not one of the bridesmaids but believed that Ferdinand had deserted his bride, and had not met with any accident. The general feeling in the village was not so much alarm as indignation. "What could have happened to him?" people asked. Nobody had any grudge against him, and he had no money with him. He had even left his watch in his room when he changed his clothes for the rehearsal that night. No, he had outlandish blood in his veins, and there was never any telling what a man who had not come from fine, unmixed New England stock might do next. However, every means for discovery as to his whereabouts were employed; searching parties scoured the woods, notices were put in the papers, and the most skilful detectives engaged. Then suddenly the village was transfixed by another mysterious disappearance. One night the first pages of all the Boston papers had columns with large head-lines stating that Anston Millet had disappeared upon the same day which had seen the last of Ferdinand Dudley. He had left his office about noon of that day, and no one had seen him since. At the same time it became generally known that the rumor of his marriage was not based upon fact. Laura Pearson said to Elizabeth that she was thankful that she had not been a bridesmaid at that wedding as well as hers, and was quite oblivious of any sting in her remark. "It is the strangest thing that your old admirer and your prospective husband should have disappeared upon the same day, dear, though, of course, there can be no connection," she said.

As time went on Elizabeth kept herself very closely at home, and her life was a rigorous monotony. As long as old Madam Dudley lived she was constant in her attendance upon her, and used to listen patiently to her piteous complaints and surmises, for the majestic old woman had fallen since her bereavement into her second childhood. She became sure that her grandson had somehow met his death by the sea. "If only I could have found his poor body," she used to tell Elizabeth over and over,—“if only I could have found that and had it buried, but to think of him tossing about out there”—and the old woman would point with her tremulous finger to the foaming crawl of the sea just visible from the window.

Elizabeth would think of that other body which she believed to be tossing about out there, beaten only God knew upon what shores, in what ghastly fragments of humanity. While Madam Dudley had no doubt that Ferdinand's last resting-place was the sea, Elizabeth had no doubt that it was Anston Millet's, and that Ferdinand was alive and in guilty hiding. The general opinion among the village folk with regard to Millet was that he had disappeared for the sake of another woman. Another woman had always been poor Millet's main motive-spring of action.

"It would have been something of a satisfaction to you if you had been really married and able to wear black for poor Ferdinand," Laura Pearson told Elizabeth one afternoon when she had come over for a call.

Laura visited Elizabeth quite frequently, though her calls were seldom returned. She told her husband that she considered it her duty. Laura had a beautiful little girl in charming little white coats and lace bonnets, and she used often to bring her along.

Elizabeth grew to have a dim feeling that she was in the light of a Lenten spectacle of wholesome ghastliness to this other woman, though she chided herself for it, thinking that it was morbid and unworthy. Laura never comforted her, nobody ever did. The needle of sympathy could never in her case probe the secret fester of trouble, since nobody knew it. "I might have worn black, I suppose, had I wished to do so, although the marriage ceremony had not been performed," she replied to Laura.

"Yes, you could, I suppose," assented Laura doubtfully, "but it would have been rather unusual, and, of course, poor Ferdinand might turn out to be alive any day, and then in case there should be—anybody else—you would feel sort of provoked that you had put on black for him. Not that—why, Elizabeth, don't look at me so!"

"What makes you think he is alive?" asked Elizabeth sharply.

"Oh, nothing. Of course, I don't really think he is. Of course he isn't, or he would have been back to see you before now. Of course he isn't, and you might have put on black, though it would have been unusual. Neither you nor poor Ferdinand ever seemed quite usual, and I don't know that anybody would have been surprised."

That was on a Tuesday night in September, not long after the brief summer war with Spain had been concluded. On the very next night Laura ran over again, hurrying through the long hall to the porch overlooking the sea, where Elizabeth and her aunts were seated. She was pale and panting; she sank into a chair, and the two old ladies peered at her over their spectacles. "What do you think has happened?" she gasped. "I have just heard it, and ran over as fast as I could. What do you think? He has come back!"

Elizabeth looked at her. "Who has come back?" she asked.

"Oh, I forgot," cried Laura; "don't look so, dear. I forgot when I spoke that you might think it was somebody else who had come back. Do forgive me, dear."

"Who has come back?" said Elizabeth.

"Don't look so, dear. I am awfully sorry, but it isn't poor Ferdinand who has come back, but Anston Millet. Why, Elizabeth!"

Laura stared with astonishment. She thought for a minute that Elizabeth had gone mad, as did the two old aunts, for she had given a

great cry of joy, and her face was beaming, and that presumably at the news that Ferdinand had not come back, but another man.

"Oh," thought Elizabeth, "he is not guilty; Ferdinand did not kill him!"

"What ails you, dear?" asked Laura, staring at her uneasily.

"Nothing," replied Elizabeth; "it is very good news. How did it happen?"

"Oh, he has been with Shafter's army," replied Laura. "He has been starved and down with fever, and all that sort of thing, like all our heroes who have fought and bled for their country's cause. I am glad, for my part, that George had the sense to stay at home and have his regular meals. Anston looks like a skeleton. I saw him go by, and did not know him. I don't know where he went in the first place. He may have been doing a little private missionary work among the persecuted Cubans in advance. I think it must have been another woman myself, but I don't suppose we shall ever know."

After Laura had gone, and the two old aunts had taken their knitting and needle-work and retired for the night, Elizabeth sat alone on the porch. All her thoughts and theories were in a chaos, and she was trying to evolve order from them. Gradually she was coming to think that if Ferdinand were innocent, and Anston had returned safely, why, he himself must be the murderer. Where was Ferdinand? What object had he for remaining in concealment, if he had not been guilty, all this time?

It was a very clear night. The rose and violet faded slowly away out of the west, and the full moon was rising above a long slope of bluffs on the east. She could see the stony strip of beach that fringed the high tide,—it ran like a silver-mottled ribbon below the bank. Suddenly she saw a dark figure hastening along over it from the west, then a head rose above the bank, and Ferdinand stood there, beseeching her not to be afraid, not to faint, telling her that he had come back, and could she forgive him.

Elizabeth stood, catching her breath, and staring at him. "Then you did not kill him," she said in a strange voice, "you did not kill him. I thought all that time——"

"Oh my God! so did I," Ferdinand cried out, "and I suffered all the torments of the damned. They need not tell me there is a hell for murderers; I have seen it, I have been there. I thought I had killed him. I struck him, and he fell. I slipped and went down too. Then I got on my feet and went away. Then I came back, and the tide was coming in, and the fog. I could not find him, and I thought I had killed him, and I could not face you and bring the disgrace of it all on you, and I ran like Cain with his brother's blood on his hands. Then I went to Spain and enlisted in the army, and then the war

broke out, and I was sent to Cuba. I could not help that, you know, though my sympathies—well, never mind that. I did not know what was coming when I enlisted. I am glad the war is over. But I thought him dead all that time, and I had found out in the mean time that he was not married, that he had hard luck, and I did not doubt you for a minute. I was sure you had learned to love me, and I began to think it might all have been due to his despair at losing you, and he had not been so much to blame as I had thought. But I thought I had killed him until I saw him in the trench that blessed day at Santiago, and I had my rifle levelled at him and I dropped it. I would as soon have fired at my good angel, but he fell back as if I had shot him,—for he had thought all that time that he killed me.”

The two old aunts were asleep in their chamber overhead, and the window was open. Presently the smoke of a cigar floated in and wakened Roxana. Then she nudged her sister and wakened her. “He has come; he is down there, sister,” whispered Roxana.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes; cannot you smell his cigar-smoke?”

Pamela sniffed hard. “Yes, I can.”

“Then you did see it in the paper, sister.”

“Yes, I knew I did; I told you so. There it was in the list of names of the persons who came on that ship from Cuba—Ferdinand Dudley. I knew it must be he, but I thought it best not to tell dear Elizabeth, lest he should not come to see her, and she have her feelings lacerated anew.”

“It did seem best not to tell her,” assented Roxana.

“Now he has come. I can smell his cigar-smoke,” said Pamela.

“I wonder if he and Elizabeth will live here?” Roxana said timidly.

“I don’t know, now Madam Dudley is dead,” replied Pamela.

“It will seem strange to have a man in the house, when we have not been used to one for so many years, sister.”

“Yes, it will,” assented Pamela with a grim sigh.

The two old sisters lay listening to the soft, unintelligible murmur of love from below, and their room was quite full of cigar-smoke, so full that they could not sleep.



LARKSPUR

BY CLINTON SCOLLARD

I SEE, whene'er I catch your heavenly hue,
A trim old English parterre, soaked with sun,
And hear, down-dropping from the brooding blue,
The flute-clear, silvery lark-notes, one by one.

CHEEVER'S MAGIC MASHIE

By Edwin L. Sabin



NOTWITHSTANDING its title, this is no fairy-story. It is absolutely true, as can be proved to your satisfaction if you chance to know the two persons directly involved. And, indeed, if you do not have such acquaintanceship, go ask the ram.

Above the fireplace mantel in Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Cheever's parlor hangs a beribboned golf-club. But do not attempt to handle it, for the head and the splintered shaft are only slightly glued, the one to the other. To almost anybody it will be evident at first glance that the club on exhibition before him is a driving-mashie; furthermore, if he is fairly well versed in golf matters, he will perceive that even at its best it must have been merely second grade, and he will conclude that nothing but some extraordinary performance could have made it worthy of thus being immortalized.

He will be right. The club was second grade, unusually ugly, and also rusty and warped. Nevertheless, Cheever found that it came to his grasp as the bow to the fiddle. It just exactly suited him. Why, neither he nor any other expert could tell. He loved it, and used it constantly, to the exclusion of many a higher-priced club in his collection. With it he won innumerable matches by making extravagant shots. Colleagues looked on in wonder, and vainly bought clubs of the same brand.

Despite the happiness that should have been consequent upon the possession of an infallible mashie and the envy of a host of competitors, on a certain dull afternoon in November Cheever might have been descried sitting grumpily behind the bunker which rises between holes five and six, half way down the course.

It was a tremendously high bunker—so high that it was popularly styled "Bunker Hill." The impression obtained that it was being increased abnormally by the dirt dug up by duffers and carted here by the green-keeper. Only a portion of the dirt removed from a hole will fit into it again, and yet something must be done with the residue.

Sitting here, and brooding, Cheever (a tall, slender young man, with drooping hazel mustache and a habitually bored air) was a striking example of the innate discontentment of man. Although he even had beaten the club's professional, actually he was wanting more! He

wanted Jewel Thorpe. But in respect to her his mashie had been powerless, else would he have gained her among his other trophies.

To-day Cheever seemed to be the only player out. The loneliness pleased him, for he was bent on moping. Behind him was the bunker. Before him stretched the remainder of the links—a monotone in quiet grays and browns which merged all together the rag-weed and the hardy sumac and the artificial hazards scattered at well-calculated but ostensibly careless intervals.

He had been here three-quarters of an hour, and now was half-reclining on his right elbow on the slope of the bunker, his bag negligently thrown beside him, and in front of him his ball, lying just where it had fallen, nicely lifted over, when he became aware that he was being observed.

This witness to his despondency was a huge ram, the leader of a flock of sheep employed to keep down the grass of the course. The flock had been taken off for the winter; why the ram had been permitted to wander disconsolately about for a few days longer no one knew, save the green-keeper—or the ram. The ram had a distinct will of his own.

Thus at the present moment he was standing firmly in the passageway through the middle of the bunker, on Cheever's left, and with glassy brown eyes was staring unwinkingly at him. Cheever, feeling that his solitude was invaded, over his shoulder caught a glimpse of the animal, and shifted position so as to obtain a better view of the intruder. Thereupon the ram, as if he had been awaiting recognition, promptly snorted and pawed violently with his left fore-hoof.

Cheever said, "Get out, you beast!"

The ram made a little curvet, and shook his head belligerently.

Plainly he was in an obstreperous frame of mind. The grass had not been worth the chewing—a stray golf-ball had bruised his lip—all day he had had nothing save bunkers to butt—assign whatever reason you may, he was spoiling for a fight.

But Cheever proved disappointing. In vain the ram snorted defiance, flung the earth far over his broad back, lowered his horny head and butted the air, and bounded up and down in one spot. The man not only refused the proffered gage, but finally even ceased to notice him at all.

Cheever had reached that stage in love when life is hollow, and a puncture, although from a ram, will be welcome.

Cheever uncivilly turned from his shaggy companion and resumed the interrupted current of his sad thoughts. The ram, with fine chivalry declining to hit a man who was absolutely spiritless, at first indignantly protested by dancing a war-dance in the narrow gap which he had elected to defend, thrusting and parrying, demolishing an imaginary

opponent, and hurling forth the bitterest taunts in his vocabulary. As this programme had no appreciable effect, he lapsed into a stony calm, doggedly holding his place, expectant. At times Cheever would stir wearily; thereupon a gleam of hope would spring into the ram's protruding eyes, and he would execute a fancy step or two.

Suddenly Cheever, plunged once more into his desperate reflections, received a smart blow on the right leg. Suspecting that this was some new insult from the ram, he quickly twisted his head to see. But the ram was still within his self-allotted limits, and, as Cheever looked at him, insistently telegraphed in his peculiar code, "Come on! Come on!"

Cheever changed his glance to the point where he had felt the blow. He saw a golf-ball—a strange golf-ball—on the ground beside his leg.

Only mildly interested, he relaxed into his former attitude and waited for the next happening.

Presently he heard an extra snort from the ram, and, gazing languidly, comprehended that the animal had reversed himself, and that his stubby, cocked-up tail was now where his head had been. This but for an instant. While Cheever watched, the beast nimbly backed out of the passage-way, and with a leap scaled the bunker's height. Planting himself on the top, he cavorted and shook his horns in wicked glee. Evidently he anticipated in someone approaching an antagonist more worthy of his efforts.

"Shoo! Shoo! Get away!"

It was a feminine voice, and it thrilled Cheever as could no other voice extant.

"Is that you, Miss Thorpe?" he called hopefully.

"Yes—and who's that?" came the eager reply.

"It's Edgar Cheever," he answered.

"Oh Mr. Cheever, *do* drive off that horrid goat!" appealed Miss Thorpe energetically.

The ram, in defiance, performed a little run along the embankment and returned to his starting-place, where he posed again in his previous air of saucy expectancy, inviting first this side, then the other.

"Why, I can't drive him off," remonstrated Cheever maliciously. "He's kept me here for an hour. Just be quiet and he'll not touch you."

"Be quiet!" repeated Miss Thorpe with some asperity. "How ridiculous! I came out to play golf, not to sit around. Where are you? I don't see you."

"I'm lying under the bunker," explained Cheever. "The brute makes at me whenever I stir."

"How ridiculous!" commented the girl for the second time. "Have you seen my ball? It barely cleared the bunker."

"Yes, it's under my right leg," vouchsafed Cheever with irritating cheerfulness. "It's quite safe. Are you alone?"

"Of course! Do you think that if I had a man or a boy or even another woman with me, we'd let that goat stand there?" she retorted. Cheever chuckled.

"It isn't a goat—it's a ram," he corrected.

"I don't care what he is," returned Miss Thorpe. "Are you going to drive him away—or are you afraid?"

"I can't," he responded frankly. "He's an unusually stubborn beast, and he's——"

"Then I will," asserted the other stoutly.

Cheever smiled when he heard this threat from his unseen vis-à-vis. From the farther side of the bunker issued a vigorous "Shoo!" in wrathful soprano. The ram peered intently, as if surprised; and deeming that the long-deferred attack was at last truly to commence, gladly kicked up his hind quarters and made a ludicrous pretence at executing a sally down the slope. This produced an alarmed shriek. The ram, seeing the result of his feint, pawed the earth triumphantly and bided the next move on the part of the enemy now engaging him.

"The horrid brute!" ejaculated Miss Thorpe.

"Wish I could help you," announced Cheever affably.

"You don't, either. I believe you're just laughing at me," cried Miss Thorpe. "I'm going back."

"Oh, no, you mustn't!" called Cheever with concern, which was not all simulated. "He'd chase after you, sure. Better stay where you are, and he'll get tired soon and go off."

"But you said he'd held you here for an hour," she complained apprehensively.

"Fully that," assented Cheever. "So repose yourself and take things easy, and don't let him think you're paying any attention to him. It will discourage him, you see."

"Goodness gracious—and I came out for exercise!" exclaimed Miss Thorpe in dismay. "It's a perfect shame to keep a thing like this ram on the golf-course!"

"So it is," agreed Cheever brazenly.

"Well, I've sat," said Miss Thorpe in a voice of resignation.

The ram, comprehending that it was a matter of endurance, began to forage along the top of the bunker, hastily nibbling the scanty blades of grass with a nervous eagerness betokening a desire to victual up while he had opportunity. Ever and anon he paused while swallowing and took a brief survey of his prisoners. Reassured, he proceeded with his feeding.

"Isn't it funny?" remarked Cheever, after a short interval of tremulous silence, and calling over the bunker to his concealed companion.

"What is funny?" she inquired austere.

"Why, you on one side of the bunker and I on the other, and this cold, unfeeling ram mounting guard over us," explained Cheever.

"Awfully funny," replied Miss Thorpe without enthusiasm.

Silence again ensued. The ram, with one eye out for possible attack, industriously grazed hither and thither along the almost bald crest of the ridge.

Cheever meditatively plucked a spear of grass and examined it. Then he spoke:

"Oh Jewel!" he said softly.

No answer.

"Jewel!" he repeated with more emphasis.

No response.

While the ram anxiously observed him, and snortingly warned him to keep his distance, Cheever cautiously crawled up the rather steep flank of the embankment and peeped over.

Jewel was sitting dejectedly on the edge of the sand-bed, gazing with wide-open eyes at the renewed antics of the ram, who was lashing himself into a fresh fury.

"Jewel!" persevered Cheever.

The proximity of the voice apprised her that the speaker had changed location, so she searched the top of the bunker until she perceived his head.

"Are you addressing *me*?" she inquired with freezing hauteur. "And why by my first name?"

"Oh!" said Cheever, rebuffed.

His intentions seemed to have lost momentum, for he stopped with this exclamation, and only blinked as he lay there on his stomach, with the ram, keenly alert, ready to engage him.

"Well—what?" exacted Jewel tartly.

"You—you never objected before to my calling you 'Jewel,'" protested Cheever, much aggrieved.

"Didn't I?" replied the girl with exasperating lack of interest except in the circles she was describing in the sand with her brassie.

Silence, broken only by the excited snorting of the ram, who evidently foresaw a climax.

"Why can't I call you 'Jewel' now, just the same as before?" demanded Cheever, still with his aggrieved manner, but determined to make the most of his opportunities while they were present.

"You know very well," asserted the other, not looking up. "While that ram is here you don't deserve any privileges at all. I think you're as mean as you can be!"

"But the *ram* wouldn't object," persisted Cheever, affecting to misunderstand. "Would you, you old rip?" he added, speaking to the suspicious animal. The ram shook his head.

"He says 'No,'" announced Cheever.

"However, *I do* object," stated the girl. "You're acting contemptibly."

"If the ram wasn't here could I call you 'Jewel'?" queried Cheever persistently.

The young lady, out of patience, dropped her brassie, and raised to him a face in which aggravation struggled with amusement.

"For goodness' sake, Edgar Cheever, *do* drive away that ram and stop your fooling," she cried helplessly. "I'm half frozen, sitting on this cold ground. Only drive him away, and you may call me anything—*anything!*"

Cheever gazed hesitatingly at her.

"Please do," she said, with an appealing little gesture.

In answer, Cheever jumped for his golf-bag, jerked out a club, and valiantly strode up the bunker, straight for the astonished ram.

"Get out, you brute!" he cried menacingly to the animal.

The ram, nothing loath for an encounter, lowered his front.

"Oh, be careful!" admonished the fair spectator from below the plane of combat.

Undaunted by the ram's threatening attitude, Cheever advanced and struck him smartly across the horns. The club snapped at the juncture of wood and iron. The ram gave a startled "ba-a." Pressing his advantage, Cheever sturdily laid on with the pliant shaft, and in an instant the battle was decided. Victory perched on the banner of Cheever, and the ram, with many a loud lament, was fleeing o'er the pasture.

"You've broken your club—that's too bad!" called the girl, as Cheever, after having briefly pursued the routed enemy, approached her.

"And it was your magic mashie too, wasn't it? I'm *so* sorry!" she exclaimed.

Cheever gravely nodded.

"I'm not," he replied, "for I drove off the ram, and you said if I did that I might call you anything I chose. May I?"

He came closer to her.

"You promised," he urged gently.

But what he succeeded in calling her—and there was quite a list—he uttered in such disconnected tones, often muffled by her hair and cheeks and lips, that even the ram, although without being noticed he had sneaked up very near, was unable to catch them. So he laughed derisively and cantered away.

Ere the stroll homeward from the eventful bunker Cheever pocketed the mashie head; and now head and shaft, once more united, hang above the Cheever fireplace—so enshrined because, says Cheever, the club, faithful unto death, gave up its life in making the most glorious "drive" of its career, and in winning first prize.

Mrs. Cheever laughs and blushes, but she keeps the ribbons fresh.

HER DAY OF FREEDOM

By Ina Brevoort Roberts



R ALPH ARMSTRONG swung along through Central Park in the early morning, whistling softly and watching the mists dissolve and leave the broad stretches of close-cut grass diamond-strewn with dew.

He had been out all night on an assignment in Harlem, and he was taking this walk in order to get the odor of bad tobacco and worse whiskey out of his nostrils and to clear from his mind the atmosphere of the place he had just left.

So far he had met no one, not even an early bicyclist, but as he rounded a turn in the path Ralph came suddenly upon a woman seated on one of the benches. Her face was buried in her hands and she was crying softly.

The sharpness of the turn had brought him close to her side before he saw her, but evidently she had not heard him coming, and he stood and looked down at her a moment in silence, his reporter's instinct unconsciously taking in the details of her appearance.

Her plain black dress was ill-fitting and shabby, and the sailor-hat she wore was of cheap straw and had lost its shape. Ralph noticed also that her brown hair was fine and luxuriant, and that her hands were well-shaped, with long, tapering fingers.

Finally the young man spoke to her gently. "I beg your pardon," he said, "but can I help you in any way?"

Startled, the stranger raised her head, and Ralph saw that she was scarcely more than a girl, though there was the look of a woman in the gray eyes that were set in her pale, impassive face.

"No," she answered, "there is nothing you can do for me. Thank you." She spoke slowly and with a slight foreign accent.

"You are sure?" urged Ralph. "You must be in trouble of some sort."

"I am not." There was a trace of stubbornness in her tone.

"People do not generally cry unless they have something to cry about—that is, nobody but children," Ralph said.

"Not women?" she retorted.

Ralph laughed. "That's one on me," he said; "but the women

who cry over nothing usually like to have an audience. They don't get up this early in the morning and come out here to do their crying."

She made no answer to this, and Ralph went on more seriously: "I wish you would tell me about it. Perhaps I may be able to help you. If you are in want——"

The girl drew herself up haughtily and started to rise, but changed her mind and sat down again.

"Thank you," she said, "but I have money." She began a search among the folds of her gown, and when she had found her pocket she drew out a dollar bill.

"See," she said, looking from the money to Ralph with the air of a child exhibiting a treasure; "I have this to spend, and to-day to do as I please in. I wanted to see what it would be like to own a whole dollar—just a dollar—and a day. A day and a dollar are great possessions, aren't they?"

The young man found himself puzzled. A varied experience with all classes of people had rendered him unusually quick at placing the social status of men and women, but he seemed unable to define this girl's station in life.

Had the encounter occurred in any other place, Ralph, on finding her unwilling to tell him the cause of her grief, would have respected her reticence and left her alone, but, being a newspaper man, he had had too much experience with Park suicides to feel justified in pursuing this course in the present instance. The change in the girl's manner from poignant grief to a fanciful humor had been too abrupt to admit of belief in its sincerity.

"I will leave you," he said aloud, "as soon as you tell me why you were crying. I cannot go until I find out."

"No, I suppose not," his companion answered slowly. She seemed to divine at once what his words were intended to imply—that he felt bound in the matter, a responsibility that would not allow him to leave a fellow-creature alone in distress.

"I shall not tell you, though," she went on. "You could not help me; nobody can. But you have been kind; you did not 'pass by on the other side.' I was not crying for anything tangible; my grief was as silly as Alexander's sighing; or perhaps my tears were for the moon. I am like everyone else; now that I have what I want, I don't know what to do with it."

"Oh, I see," said Ralph, smiling; "your dollar is burning a hole in your pocket."

"No, it is not the dollar that is troubling me: that will keep; but when night comes my day will be gone, and I do not often have a day to myself."

"This is my day off too," said Ralph. "How are you going to spend yours?"

"I hardly know," his companion answered. "I longed for a holiday, and now that I have it I do not know how to do what I want to do."

"What is that?" Ralph asked.

"I scarcely know how to tell you," the girl answered, with her eyes absently following the movements of a distant gardener, "but I should like for one day to get into the middle of things,—to see life from the inside, and not as a person watching a play. I want to be part of the color on the canvas, a figure in the procession."

Ralph felt a sudden rush of sympathy. It was so his occasional visits to the city used to make him feel when he had lived in the country. To be a figure in the procession—that was just how he had put it in his mind when he had looked on at the working, struggling crowd, longing to mingle with it and fight his way like the rest.

He looked down at his companion with interest. How they had jumped "into the middle of things" in their talk! He supposed it was the unusualness of their meeting—the place and the hour.

"Do you know," Ralph said at this moment, sitting down beside her, "I am curious to know where you will spend your day and what sort of a person you will choose for a companion?"

At the last part of this speech the girl looked surprised; evidently the thought of a companion had not occurred to her.

"I know no one whom I should care to take with me," she said with cold vehemence, "so I shall go alone."

"A day such as you want to spend would not be complete without a comrade."

"A comrade!" She spoke scornfully. "Are there such things, I wonder? There may be in your world; I have found none in mine. No, I don't want a man to make love to me or a woman to bore me, so I shall spend my day alone."

"Why not let me go with you?" suggested Ralph. "I will try not to bore you, and I certainly shall not make love to you. You might take me in the character of a watch-dog—for protection."

The girl did not grow angry at this proposition, as Ralph had feared she would; she only shook her head and looked at him thoughtfully. "That would be a very unwise thing to do," she said. "You forget that we are strangers. I ought not to be talking to you now."

"I will not admit the latter," Ralph answered, "for the circumstances surely warranted our conversation. As to the other—well, of course, you are right in a way. However, if you should let me go with you, I can promise that you will not be sorry. Still, I shall not urge you."

His companion shot a quizzical glance at him from eyes that were

laughing. "How shrewd of you," she observed, "to take the surest method of getting your own way."

Ralph flushed slightly under his fair skin. "I was sincere," he said.

The girl looked contrite. "I beg your pardon," she murmured; "you must blame the age, not me. It is a mark of the times to get below the surface and suspect motives."

Ralph did not answer, and for a moment they sat silent; then his companion turned and faced him with the manner of one whose mind is made up.

"You may go with me if you like," she said. "I know it is an unconventional thing to do, but, as you say, my day would not be complete without a comrade, and to-day I could not tolerate anyone who knows me. If I am doing wrong, there will be plenty of chance to atone in the future."

"Then you believe in expiation?" queried Ralph.

"Well, not in foreordained expiation. I spoke thoughtlessly. What I should have said was that I meant to disregard conventionality for once and make the most of my day of freedom."

"And now where would you like to go?" asked the young man. "We shall have an early start, at all events."

"Yes, and isn't it wonderful here now? Do you suppose the world is newly made like this every morning?"

"Certainly," said Ralph gravely. "If we had been here just a trifle earlier, we should have seen the fairies at work. Where shall we go?"

"I should like to spend the day at Coney Island."

Ralph felt something like a shock. He had experienced somewhat the same sensation when the most beautiful woman of his acquaintance confided to him her fondness for corned beef and cabbage.

"I have never been there," his companion went on.

"I thought everyone had been to Coney Island," said Ralph. "You will not like it," he added in a decided tone.

"Perhaps not," returned his companion, but she did not offer to change her choice.

"Have you had breakfast?" Ralph asked.

"Just a bite, before I left the house."

"Well, you must be hungry, and so am I. Come, let us go."

She rose at once, and they walked on in silence until they reached the entrance that leads to the Broadway cars.

"Cannot we go to one of those places where cooks in white caps bake cakes in the window?" Ralph's companion asked as they rode down in the car. "I have never been in one, and they always look so inviting."

Ralph smiled. How little it seemed to take to give her pleasure. "Doesn't the sight of those cakes and the thought of what an incalculable number the man must bake in a day destroy your appetite?" he asked.

The girl made a little gesture of scorn. "Why should it," she said, "if one is hungry and the things are clean?"

She took her breakfast in courses,—first fruit, then oatmeal, followed by a chop with rolls and tea. Ralph watched her dainty way of eating with interest. "Like most people," he said to himself, "she has evidently 'seen better days.' I wonder how she came to be so poor."

His companion's next remark lay so close to his thoughts that Ralph felt a guilty sense of having had his mind read.

"At the last moment, after I had everything all arranged," she said, "I was afraid I should have to give up my day, after all, because I had nothing suitable to wear. However, I managed to borrow some things."

The reporter felt himself grow sorry for the young creature opposite him; she must be very poor indeed.

An hour or so later they found themselves on the boat, which was crowded with the usual types. There were sweethearts out for a day's pleasure; groups of giggling girls; children who made a clatter with their pails and shovels and talked incessantly in shrill trebles; lonely women in couples; and tired-looking mothers with sickly babies.

Ralph secured a couple of camp-chairs, and they settled themselves in a shady spot.

"All the way down in the elevated," he said, "I was trying to think of an appropriate name for you. I must call you something, you know."

His companion looked at him a moment in silence; then she said gravely, "My name is Constance."

Ralph repeated it after her. "Constance," he said; "it is a stately name." He thought it well suited to her, but he did not say so.

They did not talk much as the boat rode gayly over the shining water. Constance sat watching the people near them, and Ralph watched her and wondered what she was thinking.

"Look at that yacht," he cried suddenly when they were well down the bay. "Isn't she a beauty? Just see her skim along. Wouldn't I like to own a boat like that!"

Constance turned to follow Ralph's gaze, but she did not share his enthusiasm. "The view is just as fine from here," she said.

Ralph thought of the fable of the fox and the grapes.

Half an hour later they moved with the crowd off the boat and along a pier that seemed to be endless. "This is Coney Island," said Ralph.

"What a noisy place," was her first comment, and as they advanced the noise grew greater; but it was not until they had left the pier and were out in the sunlight that the full volume of sound burst upon them.

The scene was one calculated to bewilder unaccustomed eyes and ears. The metallic music of half-a-dozen merry-go-rounds clashed together in deafening discord, and in the intervals the clatter of dishes vied with the shouts of a hundred men, each exploiting his own particular world-wonder; while from the dense, seething mass of humanity that swarmed along the paper-strewn walks rose subdued, murmuring waves of sound, monotonous and insistent as the roaring of the sea.

Ralph saw his companion's eyes dilate with amazement.

"What a horrible place," she said.

"I told you you would not like it. Come, let us go back."

"No, I shall stay. I knew that I should not like it, but I wanted to come. Besides, it is not any worse because we are here looking at it. But think of living in a place like this! Can nothing be done to make it any better?"

"I am afraid not," answered Ralph.

They stopped after a little to watch the children at one of the merry-go-rounds, and Ralph was glad to see a smile replace the look of horror on the girl's face.

Later he tried to induce her to go to Manhattan Beach, but she was not to be persuaded, so he was obliged to sit and watch her eat a bad dinner in a cheap restaurant.

After dinner she made an effort to throw off her depression and partly succeeded.

"You must choose some trinket and let me give it to you as a souvenir of our day," Ralph told her.

"Oh, yes, I should like that," she said at once, and her tone made him think that gifts must be rare occurrences in her life.

After this her eyes searched the booths as they passed, and presently she stopped and picked up a pin, a cheap, gaudy affair, set with what were obviously only bits of colored glass.

Again Ralph felt something like a shock. He had supposed she would choose something simpler. Her gentle, well-bred manner and quiet dignity seemed incompatible with a taste for imitation jewelry.

However, he paid the price of the pin without comment, and Constance took it with a pretty, pleased air. Ralph watched her fasten the tawdry thing at her throat, and something about the way she wore it seemed to take away a little of its showiness.

Ralph was glad when they were on the boat once more, and the girl beside him evidently shared his feeling, for she drew a deep breath as she exclaimed, "How glorious this is after what we have just left."

"It was a mistake to take you there," said Ralph.

"No, no!" Constance emphasized her words by a little gesture of denial. "I wanted to go, so it was my fault. And I am not sorry; it has made me less discontented with my own lot."

Ralph looked at her with pity in his eyes as he thought of her poverty and hard-working life.

"I ought to be sleepy," he remarked presently, "but I am not, though my head has not touched a pillow since night before last. However, I don't have to report at the office till to-morrow morning, so I can have a good sleep to-night."

"I wonder what sort of work you do?" said his companion, looking at him in a contemplative way.

"I am a reporter on the *Globe*," the young man told her.

Constance shrank back as though his words had been a blow. "Had I known that I should never have come with you," she cried angrily. "I despise reporters. They are——" She stopped with an effort.

"Go on," said Ralph pleasantly. "I don't mind your calling me names; but I cannot see what my being a reporter has to do with your coming with me to-day. Are you afraid I shall write up our trip for my paper?"

Constance shook her head, and it seemed to Ralph that she regretted her vehemence of the moment before. "I never thought of that," she said, "but you surprised me. You have been so kind that it is hard to believe you belong to a class of people who earn their living by prying——" Again she stopped.

"What you consider prying into other people's affairs I call exposing crime," said Ralph.

"What good does it do to proclaim it to the world every time a man steals a loaf of bread?"

"A great deal," replied the young reporter earnestly. "The fear of publicity is a greater preventive of crime than the threat of punishment, and in my opinion the newspapers do more for the country than its laws. And believe me, the people who lead honest, sober, moral lives run very little chance of getting into the papers until after they are dead, unless they wish to."

"There are exceptions," Constance spoke vehemently.

"Yes, of course, as always, but it is not fair to judge by them. Besides, even the exceptions generally prove to be for the good of the majority."

Constance sat silent a moment, wrapped in thought; then she said: "You may be right, after all; anyway, you make me see things in a new light. Do you like your work?" she went on to ask.

"Oh, yes," Ralph replied enthusiastically; "it is fine to be in the midst of the rush of events. Just now the sensation of the hour is the refusal of one of the richest women in the city to give the newspapers

any information about her wedding, which is to come off shortly. It seems the affair is to be very quiet, yet the papers were intending to give a lot of space to a description of the presents and the trousseau; but the bride-elect, who appears to be a very strong-minded young woman, absolutely refuses to allow a newspaper man in the house. I went up there the other day and had the door slammed in my face. I am speaking figuratively, of course."

"I don't blame her," said the girl.

"Well, I think a good deal as my city editor does," replied Ralph. "'As a man,' he said, 'I respect her for it, but as an editor I should like to shake her.'"

Constance smiled at this.

"I have orders to go to the house again to-morrow," Ralph continued, "but it will be a waste of time. Every reporter in the city has tried and failed. This Miss Heywood has a reputation for queerness, anyway. She is not at all like the regulation society girl. Rumor says she is only marrying because her family give her no peace on the subject; the man has a title."

"What would happen if you should succeed?" queried Constance.

"Oh, all sorts of pleasant things. The other fellows would envy me, and my editor would pat me on the head. If the skies fell, and I secured a beat for my paper, I should probably get an advance in salary and the force would give me a dinner. But I am building castles in the air. I am about as likely to succeed as I should be if I went over to the other side and tried to interview Queen Victoria."

They were somewhat silent after this. The day was gradually slipping into evening, and the charm of the twilight hour cast its spell over them.

Ralph had been studying his companion all day, and now, as he looked at her strong, fine face, with its curious expression that was half-wistful, half-humorous, he was conscious of a feeling of pity for her that was very near to tenderness.

"Have you had a pleasant day?" he asked softly.

"Yes." She said the word in a tone as low as his. "And I shall always remember it. It's odd, isn't it, how some days slip into the past and others live all one's life as memories? This day has been different from any I ever spent before."

"It has been different to me too," Ralph said gently. "And how do you like yourself as a figure in the procession?" he went on in another tone.

"I hardly know," returned the girl. "It has not seemed real. It is not possible, I suppose, to fit oneself into a new scheme of life all at once. Did you ever have a longing to get away for a time from all your ties and see what life would be like under different conditions?"

"It would be pretty much the same old story, you may depend upon it," answered Ralph.

"I think we had better go below now," he said a little later, as the boat neared her dock and the crowd began to get upon its feet.

Constance rose and took a last look at the black water, glistening here and there with patches of light from the moving boats. There was a thoughtful look on her face as she turned towards Ralph again.

"Yes, let us go," she said; "and we must say good-by too." She spoke slowly, and Ralph fancied there was a note of regret in her voice.

"No, no," he cried, "you must not go like this. I must see you again. Tell me your name——" He stopped and looked at her beseechingly.

Constance shook her head. "I can tell you nothing," she said; "do not ask me."

Ralph argued, pleaded, implored, but all to no purpose. The girl would tell him nothing, nor would she give him any reason for her reticence.

When they had crossed the gang-plank Ralph, on hearing a commotion behind him, turned his head in the direction of the noise, and when he looked round again Constance had disappeared. She had slipped away from his side and the crowd had swallowed her up.

Amazed and angry, Ralph began to search for her. As he reached the street he scanned every woman in the scattering throng, but the figure he sought was nowhere to be seen, and he was at last obliged to give up his search and make his way towards the elevated.

When Ralph reached his desk in the *Globe* office on the following morning he was in the worst possible temper, for in spite of the fact that he was sorely in need of rest he had not been able to sleep much on the previous night.

Thoughts of Constance and conjectures as to her identity had haunted his brain, and he found himself going over her words again and again, trying to piece them together to form a clue.

His head ached with thinking of it all as he mechanically opened his letters, but among them he found something which, for a time, at least, banished every other subject from his mind.

This was an order giving him, Ralph Armstrong, permission to enter the house of Miss Heywood and to write a description of her wedding presents with a list of the names of the givers. The order was marked "Not transferable," and was typewritten, with the exception of the signature, which Ralph could not make out.

At the eleventh hour the eccentric young bride-elect had overcome her dislike of publicity.

When Ralph entered the palace Miss Heywood called her home he

found himself listening for footsteps and scanning every face that passed him in the hope of catching a glimpse of the bride-elect, but he saw no one, except numerous servants and the florist's assistants, who were arranging the decorations for the wedding.

The reporter was conducted up the polished stairway by an old man in livery, and on one of the landings he paused and stepped back, startled at finding himself confronted by a full-length portrait of the woman he longed yet scarcely hoped to see again.

He did not need the servant's information to tell him whose the portrait was. His comrade of the day before was Constance Heywood, the woman upon whom all eyes were centred because of her great wealth and her approaching marriage.

The mystery solved, all the questions of the night before rushed forward to fit themselves to the answer. Ralph understood now her dislike of reporters and her wish to see life from a point of view different from that of a rich woman.

To be part of the color on the canvas, a figure in the procession; that was what she had said, and that was why she had dressed in shabby clothes and gone out when none but the world's workers were astir.

She was all in white in the portrait, with a long train, and there were feathers in her hair; the costume was evidently the one she had worn on the occasion of her presentation to the Queen.

Ralph stood still, with the servant waiting behind him, and took in every detail of the picture: the rich, imposing gown, with one tiny slippered foot peeping from beneath it, the jewels covering head and neck and arms, the proud erectness of the slender body—all these things he noted, and then he studied her face. The mouth was unsmiling and the gray eyes had a weary expression in them that had not been there the day before.

Under such changed circumstances he did not want to see her again, Ralph told himself as he went on up the stairs. It would put her farther away from him with a barrier between. For a day she had been at his side, his comrade, and it was so he would keep her in his memory.

Once in the rooms where the presents lay Ralph resolutely banished these thoughts and gave his attention to his work. He wrote glowing descriptions until it seemed to him that he must have down every combination of gems and design of shape known to the jeweller's art.

Suddenly he caught sight of something that made his heart give a quick leap. Between a necklace of blood-red rubies and a bracelet of fiery opals stood a tiny case, and in it—Ralph bent closer to make sure there was no mistake—lay the pin he had given Constance the day before.

Yes, it was the same. The cheap stones and the tawdry setting looked cheaper and tawdrier than ever amid so much genuine brilliance.

The sight of the trinket seemed to send Ralph back to Coney Island with Constance by his side, and it was as from a dream that he presently woke to his surroundings again.

When he finished his task and left the house the workmen were trimming the arch of white roses under which the bridal party was to stand.

The city editor smiled approval as he glanced over Ralph's story.

"You couldn't manage to get in to the wedding and write that up too, could you?" he asked.

"No," said Ralph decidedly, "I could not."

On the following morning the young reporter was summoned to his chief's room.

"I could scarcely believe you when you told me you were the only reporter at the Heywood house yesterday, but we have certainly beaten them all this time," said that personage as he glanced at the open newspaper spread out before him; "not another paper in the city has so much as a hint of what the presents are."

He then went on to tell Ralph what his salary would be in the future. "How in the world did you manage it?" the chief asked after Ralph had thanked him. "Why don't you write it up? Tell what wiles you used to get into the house and how you gained permission to make that list. You can make a good story of it."

"No," said Ralph, "I cannot do that; I cannot even tell you about it." And there was something in his tone that made the other man feel it would be useless to urge him.



THE PROMISED LAND

BY ETHEL M. KELLEY

YOU and the morn!
The dew-hung world and the gladdened cry
Of the waking lark,—and you and I!

You and the noon!
The hushed breath of the languid leaves,
The flashing sun on our cottage eaves!

You and the night!
The sea's heart throbbing against the land,
Stars, and the near touch of God's hand!

A CHINESE CUE

By Harold Ballagh

(CARRIE ELIZABETH HARRELL)

Author of "Tales from Japanese Folklore," "Ushi Toki," etc.



"Loveless, man would be heartless;
From this passion we learn tenderness."

—*Ode of Shusei.*

"WILT thou keep it?" asked Ah Cheng.

Sing Lee permitted a flicker of surprise to slightly widen the space between his eyelids. He looked from his sister's face to the little bundle that lay in her arms.

After a momentary hesitation he reflectively poked the bright-colored roll she held, and to his amazement his finger was caught by tiny elfish talons. He tried to shake himself free, but he found it was not easy. A broad grin widened his mouth and his eyelids puckered together.

"The child intends to keep me," he said, gently shaking his captive forefinger.

"As it is not a son, the Tower is the best place for it," suggested Ah Cheng sullenly.

Sing Lee frowned involuntarily at this reminder of his blasted hopes, but the mental vision he had of the Tower of Silence and the birds of prey hovering over it was distasteful when applied to this daughter who clung so tenaciously to his finger.

It was as if she said:

"Lead me! Save me!"

"We will not expose her to the death," he said softly, and, taking his other hand, he gently unwound the little tendrils that grasped him; but from that moment he never even tried to unloose his heart from the bonds that held him captive.

Ah Quai, his wife, was now lying on a narrow bedstead, the curtains of which were tied back, and hanging beside them were bright, silken embroideries, designed to ward off evil spirits.

Her beady eyes and eager ears had lost nothing of the scene, but when Sing Lee looked at her she said,—

"As the gods gave no son, it were well to return——"

"The child goes not to the Tower—I have spoken," said Sing Lee.

"But a girl cannot perform the rites of ancestral worship, and we are not rich," reminded Ah Quai.

Sing Lee looked angry for a moment, then he laughed outright.

"Poverty is the grain of sand in the oyster-shell, it forces the pearl production; therefore I must work. As for thee, thou art a conscientious woman; be now as good a mother. There is time for sons also."

But Ah Quai did not laugh, her disappointment and chagrin were too fresh. She turned her face to the wall, and Sing Lee went out of the room, after bestowing upon the new baby the only smile that had yet greeted it.

"What a waste of money to raise a girl," muttered Ah Cheng, putting down the child. "My first baby was also a girl. As soon as she was born she was taken by her father to the Baby Tower. He laid the child upon the open window-ledge and went away quickly. The next comer shoved in the bundle—but we knew not who that was." This was said in a manner transferring all blame to this unknown man.

"It is," murmured Ah Quai faintly from the bed, "a dreadful calamity to have the first child a girl!"

"That is so," assented Ah Cheng. "Besides the disappointment, there is the uncertainty of ever being able to get a husband for a girl who has no treasure laid by for dowry."

"Um," groaned Ah Quai.

The child from the dawn of its perception basked in the glow of its father's love. When he passed near, stretched-out baby arms, sparkling eyes, and cooing lips detained him. The sight of this scarlet-and-green-clad little girl, when she first learned to toddle, clinging to Sing Lee's guiding finger, brought smiles even to Ah Quai's face.

Sing Lee laughed when he saw it.

"A woman's mind is quicksilver, but her heart is wax," he murmured. To the baby he repeated, as they minced along, the ancient rhymes:

"Little baby, full of glee,
Won't you come and play with me?
Strike the stick and kick the ball,
And at the picnic-place we'll call,
And you shall come and eat with me,
And you shall come and drink my tea.
When I invite you thus to play,
How is it that you run away?"

When baby Kun first lisped these words, Sing Lee caught her up in ecstasy and enthroned her upon the angle of his great arm. With shining eyes he playfully bit her pudgy fingers, while little Kun screamed with delight at these caresses of tenderness, which she did not receive from anyone else in the world.

"How knowing the child becomes," Sing Lee exclaimed, trying to excuse this outburst of his rapture.

"Thou knowest the proverb," said Ah Quai from the bench on which she sat embroidering from silks of brilliant hues. "A child that neither learns to walk, nor speaks early, nor has teeth early, will be of a good disposition."

"The proverb says so," said Sing Lee, casting upon her a sudden glance of fury, even while he gently placed the precocious Kun upon the ground. "There is also another saying 'A man should listen to his wife, but he must not believe her.'"

Sing Lee swung himself out of the tiny court-yard. As the last glimpse of his robe vanished the child cried out and ran after him.

"Pig, you Pig, cease the noise of that crying," commanded Ah Quai.

With wondering, tear-blurred eyes Kun turned towards her mother, and, obediently swallowing her sobs, sank at Ah Quai's feet.

"Sit you there, little Pig," cried Ah Quai. "As you are not a son, at least you shall become valuable as a daughter."

Then she called the women to bring bandages, and in a short time the air was broken by interjections, shrill expostulations, and commands. Kun looked on at the mysterious preparations, alert, bird-like; but when she was firmly held and her soft little toes were bent under her foot, and bound closer and closer by the unyielding bandage, her shrieks pierced the atmosphere, it palpitated with her suffering.

"That will do; to-morrow the bandage comes closer," said Ah Quai. "Take now the other foot."

Kun's screams of fright and pain suddenly found an unexpected auditor. Sing Lee, returning from the bazaar, rushed into the court, trampling upon the large-footed maid-servants, toppling over Ah Cheng by the swiftness of his coming, and snatched Kun from the midst of her tormentors.

"Off with it!" he cried, tugging at the bandage, while the child convulsively shuddered and spasmodically moaned upon his bosom.

"Surely," expostulated Ah Quai, "thou dost not wish thy daughter to have the foot of a servant!"

"Take it off!" shouted Sing Lee.

Ah Cheng, with the trepidation of a dependent relative, unwound the bandages and straightened the bruised toes. Kun's piercing cries proclaimed her agony as the blood circulated once again. Sing Lee chafed her foot and brokenly let his heart speak.

"Little one, the pain is over.—Ye are all devil women.—It is thy father who speaks to thee, Kun.—Go, hide ye in the abode of evil spirits.—Ah, little baby, full of glee, won't you come and play with me?—Grinning children of fools, may the Goddess of Mercy increase

thy pangs.—The pain is gone, pearl of the world; it is altogether over.—May the fiends torment ye a thousand years.—Hush thee, sleep thee, little Snail.—Mayst thou never have another child.”

“Ai! This is no son, that thou playest the fool,” cried Ah Quai passionately. “Why didst thou give me no son?”

“Am I a god?” sneered Sing Lee. “Say not to me——”

“If thou wouldst have a son-in-law to burn sweet savors before thy funeral tablet and those of thy fathers, how can such a thing be brought to pass if thy daughter have the huge feet of a kitchen wench?”

Kun, with pale cheeks sprinkled with tears, hid herself in the folds of her father’s gown. Her shudders, her trembling sobs, electrified Sing Lee. Hot at heart, he cried:

“Peace! A babe of two years needs not a husband. In time, women, there is time for the son-in-law, for the feet!”

“I was myself betrothed before I was two years old,” ventured Ah Cheng.

“Give me time,” said Sing Lee, recovering his equanimity as the child’s sobs ceased, “to earn a dowry for my daughter before I seek for her a husband.”

“It is the voice of wisdom to look long upon the facts and to prepare.”

“Not yet,” muttered Sing Lee hoarsely. “Her feet shall not be bound yet.” With that he carried the child off.

“Ho! ho!” laughed Ah Quai. “‘A woman looks down to be looked at,’ says the proverb; so I appear to yield, but rest in thy heart, I will yet bind those feet.”

But she did not attempt it soon,—Sing Lee’s commands were too positive to be disregarded.

The child grew, ran, romped, and held full sway over her father’s heart. Summers and winters passed, and Kun had been trained into a demure little maid, who knew that she must not speak until she was spoken to, and to observe other niceties of etiquette.

“It is now time,” said Ah Quai, “that you should think of getting a husband.”

Kun looked wonderingly at her mother, and assented in her prettiest manner.

“But no husband,” quoth Ah Cheng, “could be induced to marry a girl with such great feet—unless she had a tremendous dowry.”

Kun looked at her offending members in great perplexity.

“Also, bad luck rests upon a house which follows not ancient customs.”

“Is it not necessary to be beautiful?”

“Look at thy mother’s small feet. She is the prettiest woman I know.”

"If she could wear such shoes, her father would no longer have cause to be ashamed of her."

At this Kun pricked up her ears. Her father was as a god to her. Was he then secretly ashamed of her? Yes, her feet were certainly monstrous compared to her mother's.

"It is full of pain, is it not? The child of our neighbor cried much, and now she runs not," faltered Kun.

"Certainly there is a little pain, but how can one be beautiful without having suffered?" asked Ah Cheng.

"A bracelet of jade will I give you," said Ah Quai enticingly.

"How delighted will be her father at the surprise we give him," grinned Ah Cheng.

"It is even so," declared Ah Quai, "for then his heart will not be troubled about the difficulty of getting a husband for her."

"It is enough. There is but one end for us all," said Kun, submitting herself to her persecutors.

But the child was still young, and her resolution could not keep back the cries and groans, and again Sing Lee, coming home unexpectedly, rushed to her rescue.

He was tingling in every nerve with anger and indignation.

"Commanded I not?" he cried.

"Nay, then," said Ah Quai, "the time has come to bind her feet if she is to grow up pretty—unless it is thy wish to have the child a by-word for ugliness—"

"It is an evil custom," he said.

"If, then, said Ah Quai insinuatingly, "the custom be foolish, is not also the habit of men to wear hair braided down the back a folly?"

"That," said Sing Lee, taken unawares, "is—is—a custom universal in China to prove a man's loyalty to the Throne."

"Say, rather," cried Ah Quai, "a badge of servitude. For my father, who was a learned man, declared to me that the Manchus required the Chinese to so dress their hair."

"Take off the bandages," hissed Sing Lee; but as no one attempted to obey, he dropped Kun's hands and fumbled with them while he spoke.

"If you revere so much the customs of the Manchus, know then that their women do not bind their feet." So saying, Sing Lee fell to chafing Kun's aching extremities, while she tried to repress her moans.

"Why do the Manchus not bind the feet of women?" asked Ah Cheng.

"It is only the Chinese of the South who follow, as I have said, this custom that is evil."

"Well, then," said Ah Quai savagely, seeing the wreck of her work

before her, "cut off your cue, unbind the girl's feet, procure then—if you can—a Manchu son-in-law!"

"There is time," muttered Sing Lee absently, with his whole thought centred in the joy and relief that spoke from Kun's eyes to his.

"The heart of man," muttered Ah Quai, "is said to be like flowers—fleeting and changeful. He will yet see my wisdom."

When this episode was quite over and Sing Lee sat smoking beside his exhausted, sleeping child, he fingered his long pipe-stem absently as he pondered on the next move he ought to make to checkmate Ah Quai.

Suddenly the grave lines of his face were broken by wrinkles of pleasure.

"A wise woman may be brought to alter the opinions of her heart, but a fool—never; therefore I will send Kun—even the dew of my heart—away to school."

After this resolve was carried out, Sing Lee devoted himself to his business, and passed the long months of Kun's absence in a half-hearted manner.

"I will not think too much about her," he said to himself, resolutely turning away from this matter that hurt his heart; "at any rate, the plans of these devil-women are foiled."

"They are fools both," sneered Ah Quai in her heart, "both Sing Lee and Kun. Would to the gods I might yet have a son, for then I should not lose sleep considering those large feet."

But there came a day when Kun came back from school.

Sing Lee's gaze rested upon her with tender pride, poorly concealed by his mask of immobility.

Kun was straight, she was merry, she had not proved herself a dunce, she was healthy, and she was plump!

Ah Quai and Ah Cheng admitted that she was beautiful, that she might count on a good match, if only—but Sing Lee received no hint of any reservation in their approbation.

With feline caution and feminine tenacity the old subject was broached to Kun herself. It was presented adroitly, persistently, conclusively. The custom of ages, the facts, stared her in the face.

"No longer art thou a child to cry for little passing aches; thou art now fourteen—a woman!" flattered Ah Cheng.

"With that complexion, and decent feet, there is no match she might not make; but what Chinaman would even glance at her face with such monstrous feet to make his household a byword!" cried Ah Quai.

The result was inevitable. With her own reluctant consent, once more Kun submitted to the binding ordeal; then she sat out of her father's sight, groaning and rocking herself in pain.

"He likes not to see you in trouble, but he will eventually be greatly pleased," the women had told her.

But he was not pleased when he came unexpectedly upon Kun hobbling about. She forced back her tears and dropped upon a bench in the court.

"H-o-o-o-o!" cried Sing Lee in a rage, casting his pipe from him, "a man's bowels become too full if he speak not. May the Five Emperors seize thee, Ah Quai!"

Ah Quai burst into tears and wild outcries. She called upon the spirits of the dead to judge between herself and her husband.

The whole household rushed into the court, chattering, frightened, eying Sing Lee with incredulous astonishment and hostility.

Ah Cheng, observing the timeliness of intrenching herself behind the final and unassailable bulwark of the Chinese woman, howls of grief, joined in the clamor.

Kun became as silent as the centre of a maelstrom, while Sing Lee glared about in dismay.

"Peace!" he shouted.

But the bawling and recriminations of the women only increased.

"Silence! Words are only misspent arrows. Will ye then," he cried sarcastically, "be like the low-class women, howlers and abusers of your protectors?"

"Oh that the august mother-in-law were alive!" shrieked Ah Quai.

"Ai, if only the venerated grandmother were here to command this unnatural son!" screamed Ah Cheng.

"Unnatural," reiterated Sing Lee hissing; "I desire to protect my only child from demon-women who claim to be her nearest relatives. Perhaps she is then a bastard—foisted——"

"No, no!" said Ah Quai, suddenly conscious of the subtlety of Sing Lee, and that she stood upon the brink of a chasm; "she is indeed the fruit of my unworthy body; she is thy honorable daughter."

Sing Lee nodded his assent; his heart told him that the child was his own; only for his own flesh and blood could he have such an absorbing interest.

"Then," said he, "remove the bandages, and never more bind her feet."

"O-o-o-o-o! Ai-ai-ai! Ah-a-a-a!" the whole household cried in protest.

"Thou hatest thy daughter," declared Ah Quai.

"Her prospects for life will be ruined!" vociferated Ah Cheng.

"She is as the pupil of my eye, the beat of my heart," said Sing Lee, on the defensive.

"Prove it, then," laughed Ah Quai triumphantly; "thou carest not for customs—then cut off thy cue!"

"Impossible!" said Sing Lee; "the cue is a sign of loyalty, a custom of ages. Without it I would be pointed at by all men, I would be suspected——"

"Then is it impossible to unbind those feet!" cried Ah Quai, pointing dramatically to Kun, huddled up, wailing softly, since she found she was no longer the centre of observation.

Sing Lee strode over to Kun's bench, fell upon his knees beside her, and awkwardly fumbled with the bandages.

"August father," sobbed Kun, "do—not—take—off—the—cloth."

"But thy tears—I cannot bear——"

"O-o-o-o," moaned Kun, pressing her sleeve to her eyes, "it will presently—be—over."

"Brave girl!" cried Ah Quai.

"A beauty too! These slippers of gold thread and pearl thou wilt soon be able to wear," encouraged Ah Cheng.

"Nay then! She shall not be crippled for life. She shall not be called 'The girl who sits in the house.' I have no son, and my only child shall not be tortured!" declared Sing Lee.

"Now, by the spirits of thine ancestors," said Ah Quay solemnly, while her people held their breath and craned their necks, "her feet stay bound until thou cuttest off thy cue!"

Sing Lee looked up in amazement at Ah Quai.

Her brows were knotted determinedly, her black eyes scintillated, her nostrils quivered, she stood upon her tiny feet commandingly above him. She steadied herself with one hand on a table, and in the other she held out a short sword.

Beholding this truly fearful goddess of obstinacy, this wall of despair, remembering her persistency, a dread glance at the invisible was given to Sing Lee. His brain thundered to his heart, "If she have not her way, she may even poison the child!"

A cry of fear burst from Kun's lips.

Sing Lee experienced an eternity of emotion in the moment he said laconically,—

"Thou hast said it—cut!"

A scornful smile flashed over the tense features of Ah Quai.

Sing Lee, kneeling at the feet of his shrinking daughter, had the posture of one ready for the blood-pit, the sword of the executioner.

Ah Quai advanced, grasped his long cue, and severed it with a savage swish of her gleaming sword.

Her people gasped in dismay.

But Sing Lee, with the pale lips of emotion suppressed, smiled at Kun, unwound the bandages, held them up triumphantly, and said,—

"Relief is true felicity!" *

* This—for a Chinaman—astonishing action actually occurred.—H. B.

THE IMAGE-MAKER

By William Le Queux

Author of "The Sign of the Seven Sins," "Secrets of Monte Carlo," etc.



A LONG the wide-open high-road that runs over the ridge of Albury Down, between Guildford and the little town of Shere, in Surrey, a young man was trudging slowly, bent forward by reason of the big, heavy basket slung upon his back, but happy, nevertheless, for on his way he whistled to himself gay operatic airs.

His trousers were sadly frayed, his dusty boots much the worse for wear, and his faded brown jacket roughly patched with gray at the elbows. He wore no collar, only a knotted mauve-colored scarf, and his soft felt was set jauntily aside as though he had not a care in the world.

And what mattered to anyone even if he had? He was only Giovanni Salvori, a poor Italian who sold plaster images in the London streets.

He was a happy fellow, this child of the sun who had come to seek his fortune beneath the gray skies of England. Dark-faced, handsome, with a pair of merry black eyes, a small jet-black mustache, and a complexion almost olive, the girls along the Adriatic shore from Pesaro up to Rimini had known him well in those days before he had left for Florence. They called him "Nino bello," but he had never courted them, for at home with his aged mother he had been a quiet, industrious lad, and had helped at the fishing ever since he had been old enough to give a haul at the nets.

In his spare time he had amused himself by modelling in clay until one day, by mere chance, the great sculptor Marini, of Florence, had seen a model he had made and took him back with him to the Tuscan capital, where he became employed in the master's studio. He was seventeen then. Marvellous was his facility for creating new models, especially the busts of women, Bacchantes, Venuses, the female characters of Dante and Boccaccio, dancing-girls, and the like. And these models were given into the hands of practised sculptors who copied them on to the marble, the great Marini himself giving them the master-stroke and disposing of them to the rich English and American visitors at high prices.

That, however, had only lasted about a year, for while passing through the studio one day Nino had overheard the sculptor declare

to one of his patrons, an Englishman, that the model of a dancing-girl was his own. The sculptor might profit by Nino's models, but he should not lie. Therefore when the Englishman had gone, the hot-headed youth took up a mallet and smashed the model to atoms.

"In future," he said, turning calmly to the wonder-stricken sculptor, "you may create your own models. Upon the marble the work is your own, but upon the clay it is mine." And with a curt "Addio" he strode out of the studio and took, a few days later, a third-class ticket to London.

Although he soon found compatriots, as every poor Italian does, the world had used him very roughly. He made his models and hawked them from door to door, but they were, alas! not appreciated as they had been in that great studio in Florence.

For over an hour now he had trudged across Albury Heath and down the winding lanes that led through the valley, when of a sudden he was passing the lodge-gates of what was apparently a large house hidden back in its park. A tall, slim woman in white flannel, scarcely out of her teens, and holding in her hand a tennis-racquet, was looking down the road, apparently awaiting someone.

Nino turned his basket in front of him and approached her, saying in his quaint English,—

"Will the Signorina buy one of my leetle statuettes—only seexpence." And he took from his basket a small clay model of Dante's Beatrice—a copy of the one he had made for the great master in Florence, who had afterwards sold the statue for ten thousand lire to an American collector.

The girl started at his voice, and as she turned quickly their eyes met.

Nino stood agape at her beauty. Her blue eyes, her soft fair hair, the sweetness of expression and purity of soul mirrored in those eyes that gazed so inquiringly upon him, held him for the moment spell-bound. She glanced at the little statuette and shook her head.

"I fear," she said, "that such things are of no use to me. But it is very graceful—made by machinery, I suppose?"

"No, Signorina," he responded, "I made it myself."

"Did you, really?" she exclaimed, examining it with increased interest. Then she asked, "Are you Italian?"

"Sisignorina. I am Romagnolo—from Pesaro."

Then in almost faultless Italian—indeed, in better Italian than he spoke himself—she inquired how long he had been in England, and whether, if he made models, he could not also carve in marble.

Surprised at hearing his own language, he asked her if she were Italian also.

"Oh, no," she responded, laughing at the suggestion. "I lived in

Perugia for some years, and so I learnt your tongue at school. But here is my uncle," and she indicated a tall, white-headed, military-looking man in gray coming down the road. "Only the other day he was saying that he wished he could get an Italian sculptor to do some carving upon the marble overmantel in the new drawing-room. Would you care to do it?"

"I should be delighted, Signorina," Nino said eagerly, for it was now two years since he had touched a chisel and executed the work he loved.

Colonel Kay-Murray, late of the Indian Army, Lord of the Manor, and Justice of the Peace for the County of Surrey, entertained a magistrate's prejudice against tramps and hawkers of every sort, therefore when he came up and found his niece Mabel talking with the ragged Italian he drew himself up and was about to order poor Nino away.

In a few words, however, she explained the situation and showed her uncle the little statuette.

"Admit a fellow like him into the house?" growled the old man in a low tone, believing that Nino could not understand. "No. I don't believe in Italians, and more especially in a ragamuffin picked up out of the street."

"If the Signore will allow me to try, I shall be pleased to undertake the work," said Nino humbly. "I have worked at Marini's studio in Florence."

"At Marini's?" repeated the Colonel quickly. "Why, he's the first sculptor in Italy! What did you do there—saw up the marble?"

"No, Signore. I learnt the art of sculpture," the young man responded simply.

Mabel pleaded for him, urging her uncle to give him a trial.

"Well, my girl, well, if you insist I suppose I must," the old man snapped reluctantly. "Bring the fellow in, and let's see what he's made of. I expect he'll turn out to be a fraud—a common stone-mason, or something of that sort. And remember—if anything happens you've yourself to blame."

"All right, uncle," she laughed, knowing the old man's brusque ways, and then all three walked up the long elm avenue to Tadmore Hall, where Nino was shown the big modern overmantel of white marble which had been placed in the drawing-room that had been newly built as a wing to the old Elizabethan mansion.

"Per Bacco!" thought Nino when the peppery old Colonel pointed out circular tablets on either side of the fireplace which he designed converting into medallions, "these English are a strange people!" The old gentleman had asked him if he thought himself competent to carve something there, whereat he smiled and inquired the subject desired, whether classical or modern.

"I leave it to you to do your best, young fellow," the Colonel said. "You'll want tools, so here's half-a-sovereign to get them. You'll get them in Guildford, I expect. Come here to-morrow and commence," said the Colonel in dismissal. Then Nino, raising his eyes to Mabel with a word of thanks for her intercession, shouldered his basket and, leaving the little statuette of Beatrice upon the table as a gift to her, went on his way back to the dusty high-road.

"Corpo di mille acciughe!" ("Body of a thousand anchovies!") he laughed aloud when again alone. "So I'm to turn sculptor now. Professor Giovanni Salvori would sound nice!"

It was dark before he entered the county town, having received many directions from the passers-by, but he found in a shop tools that would do, and next morning by good fortune also discovered a pottery where he begged a little modelling-clay. With this he modelled two allegorical female heads in bas-relief, the one of Summer and the other of Winter, which that afternoon he carried for the Colonel's inspection.

The old gentleman was out, but he saw Mabel, who declared them to be beautiful. Would he commence the work there and then? No, Nino thought it best first to obtain the Signor Colonello's assent to the design, so he would return on the morrow.

In Italian the girl with the frank eyes talked kindly to him of Italy and of its charms. But before her Nino in his ragged clothes and bulging boots stood ashamed, and she, with a woman's intuition, knew that she had enchanted this poor genius of the wayside.

She laughed within herself when he had gone. "Poor fellow!" she said aloud as she stood before her great toilet-mirror with its silver service. "I do believe he's fallen in love with me. How too absurd to have a tramp for one's lover!"

Nino returned next morning and found the designs approved.

So day after day he worked, chipping and tapping with his wooden mallet, ever and anon measuring to be exact. Slowly the medallion of Winter grew, and often Mabel would look in to see its progress, uttering encouraging words in Italian, and sending him in a tumbler of red wine, a beverage which, alas! he seldom now had the luck to taste.

One day as he passed the lodge on his way up to the house he saw the gardener's child outside playing with a broken image. He bit his lip, and tears welled in his black eyes.

She valued his present so little that she had given it into the child's hands to be broken and destroyed.

"Ah!" he exclaimed in a choking voice. "Nino, you are a fool—a fool! She can never love you—never!"

He was sullen over his work, and had nearly completed the second medallion. She did not enter the drawing-room as usual that morning, and wondering where she was, he inquired of the fat, pompous butler.

The Image-Maker

"Oh, they're gone abroad—to India," the man answered. "But the Colonel has left the money for you. So you'd better finish your job as quick as you can and be gone."

Gone! Cospettonaccio! The words fell upon poor Nino as a thunderbolt. To India! Nino's notion of India was very vague. The Peninsular and Oriental Express for India flashed every week through Falconara, and he had heard that it took three weeks to get to its destination.

But he said nothing, and worked away at the medallion, even though the light was fast fading.

On the table near by stood a fine panel portrait in a heavy silver frame—the picture of the woman who had enchanted him. He was alone in the room, and, creeping towards it, he raised it reverently to his lips. Then he gazed at it long and wistfully, at last reluctantly replacing it.

Crossing to the overmantel he set to work diligently to transform the features of Summer to those of Mabel, a likeness perfect to the life, with a garland of roses upon her head.

"Her face shall remain there in stone," he murmured to himself between his teeth. "When she returns she will know that I have not forgotten her, although she despises me and has cast aside my poor gift."

He had nearly finished, and in the twilight the butler, who was going out, came and handed him the two golden sovereigns which the Colonel had left.

He had gathered his tools and was turning away, when of a sudden his eyes caught her picture. In the dim light she smiled upon him with those sweet half-parted lips he knew so well. Again he took it up and kissed it. Then put it down, as though to touch it were a sacrilege.

What would he not give to have that portrait always with him!

But he turned away. Again, of a sudden, he turned back, half tempted to take it.

For a full ten minutes Nino hesitated, then the burning desire to possess her picture overcame his scruples, and creeping back to the table he swiftly placed it in the rush bag in which he carried his tools, and then stole out of the house unobserved. He had her portrait, and would carry it with him always—always.

Weeks passed, weeks of long days of sunshine as he tramped the roads wearily in search of buyers of his images. He no longer thought of the sun and the open country he loved so well, but always of her, the fair-haired, blue-eyed woman who had left him and was away in distant India. Twenty times each day he took the portrait from his ragged coat, in the lining of which he kept it concealed, still in its silver frame, and kissed it fervently.

"You are mine, mia adorata," he would say as he gazed enraptured upon the pictured face. "Mine—mine!"

He crossed the Thames at Windsor and, as the September rains continued, turned his face once again towards London. Along the wide high-road between Staines and Hounslow he was trudging late one evening when of a sudden a policeman came upon him, gruffly demanding his name and what he was.

Nino told him, whereupon the man grunted with satisfaction, saying:

"We've been on the look-out for quite a long time. The warrant charges you with stealing a photograph in a silver frame from Tadmore Hall, Colonel Kay-Murray's place near Guildford."

So she had allowed them to give information against him for taking her photograph! No, surely not, he told himself. It was certainly that fat, overfed butler who had demanded his arrest.

At the Staines police station the unfortunate Nino was searched, and the stolen property being found upon him, he spent the next four days in the semi-darkness of a police cell. He would not have minded in the least had they allowed him to retain his most precious possession, her picture. But the inspector had taken it away.

At his trial he admitted his guilt, and the magistrates, believing he had stolen it in order to pawn the frame, sentenced him to three months' imprisonment.

"Per Diana! She will know the truth that I am no thief," he murmured in Italian, when he understood the magistrates' decision. Then he accompanied the constable below.

Some weeks later a letter from the butler at Tadmore recounting the incident reached the Colonel at Meerut.

"There!" exclaimed the fiery old gentleman, tossing the note across to his niece. "Your young ragamuffin of an Italian has proved to be a thief, after all. I told you so."

She read the letter and smiled. He had stolen her portrait. How very droll!

Once when he had been engaged in carving those medallions she had thought herself actually attracted towards him, why she could not tell. But how absurd it was to think of a lover in rags!

And so all thought of Nino, the image-maker from Pesaro, passed from her in the vortex of Anglo-Indian gayety.

Four years later.

In a great studio in the Via Venti Settembre, in Rome, a sculptor in his dusty working-blouse was busy with mallet and chisel upon a colossal equestrian figure which had been commissioned by the municipality of Milan to adorn one of their great piazzas. In the gray light

of the fading winter's day he worked on studiously and alone, chipping—ever chipping—with the dexterity of a master-hand.

Around him were many works, torsos, copies of the antiques in the Pitti, and the wonderful masterpieces of the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence, together with many of his own creations, declared by the foreign critics to be more meritorious than even those of the great Professor Marini. Yes, Giovanni Salvori, known once in Saffron Hill as "Nino the image-maker" and convicted thief, was now the first sculptor in Italy, and holder of the gold medal from the Berlin Exhibition.

Commissions had poured in upon him from America, from Germany, and from England during the past couple of years, but success had never turned his head as it does the heads of the majority of men. He worked on simply and diligently, thinking only of the fair Englishwoman who had once smiled upon him. Did she know? Had she seen her portrait carved upon that medallion?

He thought of her always as he worked—ever chipping, ever measuring, ever polishing each day till the mellow light faded. "She will know some day," he exclaimed to himself, now that his assistants had left him and he was alone. "Yes, she does know, for they have returned the picture to her. *La mano de Dio ariva tutti.*"

Suddenly he paused in his work and, walking over, stood before a medallion upon the wall, the exact replica of that he had sculptured at Tadmore—her portrait.

He sighed, his jaws tightened, but no word escaped him. It was Nino's habit to stand there each evening before he doffed his dusty blouse and left his studio. Her face was to him a shrine. It carried him back to those hot July days among the Surrey Hills when she had smiled upon him and uttered those words of kindly encouragement which had fired him with ambition to become a master.

And yet she had forgotten him; ah! yes, she had forgotten him.

He turned sadly at last to hang up his blouse on its habitual nail, when the old man whose duty it was to sweep the studio entered, announcing that there were callers. It was nothing unusual, for the studio of a successful sculptor in any art centre like Rome is always on show to wealthy foreigners who are prospective purchasers.

So they were shown in—a man and a woman.

The man advanced into the great apartment, apologizing in English for calling at that hour, and continuing,—

"I have heard that you have just completed a figure of Mercury for exhibition in Vienna. Might we be permitted to see it? We are leaving Rome, and that is our only excuse for troubling you so late."

"I shall be most delighted to show it to you," responded the sculptor. "Only I fear you will not see it to advantage in this light." Then, leading the way to the farther end of the spacious studio, he drew the linen covering from his masterpiece.

The woman advanced slowly down the big, silent apartment, with its ghostly-looking busts and statues, until of a sudden she started quickly and stood gazing at the wall as though transfixed.

Then she hurried after her companion.

"Why, uncle!" she gasped, pointing to the wall; "there is an actual replica of the medallion at Tadmore—my portrait, they say!"

Nino heard her words and stood agape, dumfounded. In that dim half-light he had not recognized the old man as the Colonel, nor his companion, wrapped as she was in her rich furs, as the woman at whose shrine he worshipped each evening before going forth into the winter gayety of the capital.

"We have met before, Signorina,—in England!" he said simply.

"Why, bless my soul!" cried the Colonel, amazed. "It's actually our young Italian friend."

"Our friend," added Mabel, "who is now Giovanni Salvori, the most renowned sculptor in Italy," and she offered him her hand. Nino took it, thrilled by its touch. In that instant hope and life returned to him.

"You stole my heart," he said passionately when they met and walked together in the Corso on the following day, "and I stole your portrait. It was only a fair exchange."

She was silent. His deep, reverential love for her, a woman who although young had already grown world-weary, was a revelation. That earnest look in his eyes, the firm pressure of hand, the fervent words he uttered, caused her to reflect.

"The heart of Nino the image-maker was as true and as strong as that of Nino the sculptor," he declared passionately when, sitting together one evening at the Grand Hotel a fortnight later, he begged of her to become his wife. "I have loved you from the first day that you spoke to me so kindly in my own tongue when I was a stranger in a strange land," he declared fervently. "I have never ceased for an instant to love you—never for a single instant."

But why need I relate more? All Rome to-day knows Salvori, who, although wealthy and renowned, living in the princely Villa Visconti outside the city, still works in his blouse daily at the studio and receives the cosmopolitan patrons of art who crowd in to admire, to criticise, and to drink English tea.

His wife is that pretty, fair-haired Englishwoman whom one sees driving every afternoon in her smart victoria with her sweet little girl nestling at her side beneath the furs. It has often been whispered in the salons of the Eternal City that some strange romance was connected with their marriage, and the curious are now for the first time in possession of the real truth regarding the love of Nino the image-maker.

A LIGHTNING CHANGE

A COLUMBIA COLLEGE TALE

Albert Payson Terhune

Author of "Columbia Stories," "Dr. Dale," "Syria from the Saddle," etc.



SEVENTH IN THE SERIES OF COLLEGE TALES

WHO was Keith?

That was the mystery.

Columbia University to-day crowns Morningside Heights, —roomy, beautiful halls, scattered through grounds that compare with the famed precincts of Yale, Princeton, or even the University of Pennsylvania.

The Columbia of yesterday (for the dear old University is still glaringly ill at ease in her new home) was confined to one small city block, bounded east and west by Park and Madison Avenues, north and south by Fiftieth and Forty-ninth Streets.

Owing, probably, to urban surroundings, Columbia contained more aspirants to so-called social recognition than do out-of-town colleges, where boys give less time to such diversions and more to athletics.

Especially were these social aspirations strong in the senior class, whose members insisted that they were men and not boys to a far more vehement degree than would those same "men" to-day.

A dozen or so of these seniors (most of them Psi-Upsilon men, with a sprinkling of "Deaks") were banded into a sort of clique, whose sole pride rested on its exclusiveness.

And into this clique Bernard Keith had penetrated.

Keith had entered Columbia at the beginning of senior year. He was not a regular student, but a "special." In other words, he was not working for a degree, but was merely taking a few elective courses of lectures with the senior class.

He was older than most men in the class,—just how old no one could guess. His smooth-shaven, clear-cut face, hard, well-shaped mouth, and quiet eyes might belong equally well to twenty or to thirty.

Thus it was that the dozen exclusive seniors opened not only their ranks, but their homes to the stranger. Having done which, they began to ask who he was.

So long as Keith was looked on merely as a decidedly handsome, well-groomed outsider, whose manners were good and whose wit made

him a welcome addition to any crowd, no questions were asked. When, however, he became a probable fixture in the set, an idle query or two as to his antecedents and profession were framed. A dead silence followed. Then came a buzz of conjecture, rumor, and contradiction; and Keith's position as a mystery was established.

An impression, foundationless but strong, that he was the son of an English nobleman sent to America incog. to be educated, at length supplanted these theories. Then the seniors and their families suddenly ceased asking questions, tacitly agreed he was a sprig of English nobility worth cultivating for the sake of future invitations to his country-seat or to his Scottish moor, and stopped talking about him.

Money, a good presence, and decided cleverness had won the day. The sacred circle was once more solid as wrought steel. And Bernard Keith, '93, Arts, was safe inside.

But there was one person who refused to take Keith at the rest of the set's valuation.

Perhaps this was because she had put upon him a fictitious valuation of her own. While implicitly believing the English nobleman story, she yearned for particulars.

Mae Ward found Keith a more than welcome change from the ranks of callow college boys, heavy business men, and conceited litterati who had knelt at her shrine ever since she "came out," six months before.

She and Keith had met at one of Mrs. Meredith's "at homes" three months ago. Van Deusen Meredith was one of the senior "dozen." Mrs. Meredith was his mother.

Three hundred people were squeezed into a space where eighty might possibly have had comfortable elbow-room. The thermometer stood at ninety-four indoors and at twenty-one in the street.

Keith's collar had remained unwilted and he had looked neither cross nor bored. Mae was attracted to him from that minute.

He was presented to her.

"It's very warm in here," Keith had murmured amid the hubbub of voices, and she replied,—

"Yes, she is a charming hostess, isn't she?" And the next moment a crowd three hundred strong had wrested them apart.

The next evening he had found himself commanded to take her in to dinner at the Varnum's dinner-dance, given in honor of the just-achieved majority of Willie Varnum, '93, Arts. During the dance they sat together for thirty-five minutes on a red divan at a turn of the stairs. This landing was equipped for the occasion with two rubber-plants, a palm, a cloisonné vase, and three mildly pink Chinese lanterns.

Before the evening ended Mae Ward had made divers remarkable discoveries: notably that Keith possessed the pleasantest voice she had

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ever heard, that he had nice eyes, that he did not bore her by talking about himself, and that he neither boasted about his family, his athletic achievements, his pointless escapades at college, nor of the houses to which he had been invited.

And now came a new development that started tongues to wagging:

Dicky Long, '93, made the discovery that Keith always had an engagement of some sort between nine-thirty and ten-thirty P.M.

Long and Little Benton dropped in at his rooms one night after he had made study his excuse for departure. Although they hammered and shouted, his door remained locked, the rooms within silent.

And so the mystery remained, until by and by people grew tired of conjectures,—all except Mae Ward.

Miss Ward's father was an eminent lawyer. Her ancestors came to America in that elastic but sadly overcrowded craft, the Mayflower.

Along with a hypertrophied pride of birth she inherited a legal love for ferreting out mysteries and a Puritanical tenacity of purpose.

Moreover, she had so far forgotten all wise parental teachings as to fall in love with Bernard Keith, '93, Arts, and this served to keep up her interest in the man's movements.

Things had reached this stage when one evening Keith called to take her mother and herself to the Junior Ball.

"You are late, Mr. Keith," said Mrs. Ward. "I thought we were to be there by ten. It's nearly half-past ten now."

"I'm so sorry," he pleaded, "but I couldn't get away any earlier. A—lot of things prevented me."

His evident repentance softened the chaperon's heart, and she gave the matter no more thought. But with Mae it was different. This was the fifth time that she had had proof that the tale of Keith's regular nine-thirty to ten-thirty P.M. disappearance was true.

The Junior Ball is Columbia's one grand Social Event (with the largest sort of capital S and E) of the whole year. Then alone it is that class-lines give way to social precedence; when the freshman of good connections and with a reasonably pretty girl on his arm may outrank the haughtiest senior; when the "grind" and the boy who is shy in the presence of women will be wise to save the price of a five-dollar ticket by staying away; when the exclusive set of seniors are in their glory.

Bernard Keith and Mae Ward were sitting out a waltz in an alcove behind the lower gallery, where they could overlook the noisy, pretty scene below, and where a convenient palm shielded them from observation.

"Mr. Stanford tells me you do most of your studying between half-

past nine and half-past ten at night," remarked the girl innocently. "Do you?"

The man glanced at her quickly, and as quickly glanced down before replying indifferently,—

"I often study in the evening."

"Oh! that's where Mr. Stanford probably got his idea about your being busy from nine-thirty to ten-thirty every night."

"Probably. You see, in a college like this, where we have no dormitory system, the men know little about each other's actions outside of lecture and recitation hours. In the warm spring evenings I believe there are often singing and general good times on the campus, but there our college life ends."

"How about the 'Strollers'? Don't their performances help on college spirit?"

"They advertise the college by their shows in the different cities, rather than promote any particular brotherly feeling here."

"By the way, I'm to be the accompanist, you know, at the vaudeville show they're going to give for the Cherry Hill Mission next week at the Waldorf. Mamma objected at first; but it's only a drawing-room performance, and tickets are ten dollars each. And it's for the same old 'Sweet Charity.' So she gave in at last. By the way, are you a member of the 'Strollers'? or don't your talents lie in the direction of vaudeville?"

Mae fancied a barely perceptible tremor, as of contempt, ran through the man as he answered curtly, almost rudely:

"No. I have no tricks."

"I'm sorry," she answered. "It would have been rather jolly if you were in the troupe. Nowadays I spend most of my time practising on those silly songs."

Mae Ward was in the midst of this practising the following evening when Keith was announced.

"Are the songs good for anything?" he asked idly, picking up one or two sheets.

"Most of it is the same eternal old bore," she replied. "The so-called negro songs, such as no negro ever sang, and some tin-pan skirt-dance music. There's one good air among them, though," she added, taking a sheet of music from the rack, "and the words are rather clever—for that sort of thing. Mr. Hammond is going to sing it—in costume. He is coming around here some night soon to rehearse it with me. I never like to play the accompaniment to a song in public until I've gone over it beforehand with the singer."

"What is the song?" asked Keith.

"It is called 'The Song of the Wanderer.'"

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"Is that song published?" exclaimed the man. "I thought it wasn't out yet!"

"Yes; it's quite new, though, I believe. Do you know it?"

"I—I've heard it once. Would it be any help to you to go over it with me? Then it will be easier for you when you and Hammond come to practise it."

"Can you sing it after having heard it only once?"

"I think so. I pick up airs easily, and I can get the words from the page before me."

"Where did you hear it?" asked Mae as she sat down to the piano.

"Oh, at one of the variety houses, I believe," responded Keith carelessly. "An old chap made up like Stanley, with a pith helmet and a green umbrella, sang it."

The girl played a rollicking overture and Keith began the song:

THE SONG OF THE WANDERER.

"I have crossed through lands Hebraic,
I have cursed in tongues archaic,
I have met the gentle heathen and Circassian maidens fair;
Through bazaars Damascene wandered
(Where my scanty cash I squandered);
I have seen the merry leper; I have heard the call to prayer.

"I have crossed from Asian mountains
Unto Afric's sunny fountains;
I have had a swim in Jordan; I have drunk of Father Nile;
I have seen Egyptians ragged
And a Moslem Imam jagged,
Who discoursed on worldly matters in a most unseemly style.

"Up the Pyramids I've scrambled,
Through Saharan deserts ambled;
I have jollied ancient mummies; I have gazed upon the Sphinx;
I have yellowed every dental
With tobacco Oriental,
And I've queered my constitution with unholy Eastern drinks.

"Lacking better occupation,
I've composed (in adulation
Of my prowess in such matters) this inspiring little lay;
You can bet your bottom dollar
That my number sixteen collar
Now supports a head whose magnitude you don't see every day."

"I thought you said you had only heard that song once," commented Mae at the close.

"Well?" asked Keith.

"Yet you sang it from memory. After the first verse you never even glanced at words or music."

"I've a knack for remembering silly things."

"Where is your home, Mr. Keith?" inquired Mae suddenly. "I don't mean your bachelor rooms here in town, but your real home."

"My home?" echoed Keith, his half-shut eyes alone giving token that he was on guard. "My home is wherever I chance to be among thoroughly delightful people for a half-hour. For instance, I am very much at home now."

"That was just a trifle heavy, wasn't it?" asked Mae.

"How about the question that led to it?" retorted Keith laughingly.

The girl laughed too, but there was a note of vexation in her laughter.

"Mr. Keith," she said, "do you know you have been the object of a great many conjectures during the past winter?"

"Thank you. Give me anything but indifference."

"But people are saying——"

"They are very kind to take so much trouble. After all, what does it amount to?"

"But you never speak of your personal affairs, of yourself or of your people."

"Why should I bore myself with uninteresting themes? Still, if it will really give you any pleasure, I will gladly tell you the story of my life in words of one syllable and in language fitted for the ears of the young. I was born of poor but honest parents——"

"I don't like to have people make fun of me," interrupted Mae somewhat stiffly.

"But they *were* honest, Miss Ward," Keith protested with mock solemnity, "and poverty has run in the family for generations. Really, you can't expect me to clear up mysteries if you begin by accusing me of making fun of you."

"Then," pursued the girl, ignoring his last speech, "there is a lot of curiosity about your disappearing in that Cinderella-like fashion each night at exactly nine-thirty. You will pardon my rudeness in repeating all this, won't you? You know that I am inquisitive by nature."

"So were Psyche and Elsa and Mrs. Bluebeard; but I never heard that any of them was the happier for having her curiosity gratified," rejoined Keith.

Mae felt a hot flush rise to her face. She could not explain it, except possibly by the troubled look that accompanied Keith's words.

An old engraving of the "Parting between Lohengrin and Elsa" hung in Judge Ward's study. Mae remembered that the Swan-Knight's eyes had worn such a look as they bent upon the woman whose curiosity had cost her his love.

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The full strength of the simile dawned on Mae, and she could not raise her eyes to the tall, knightly figure before her.

"Forgive me," she murmured; "I have been very, *very* rude."

"Please don't say that," urged the man. "You were perfectly right to ask, and I answered you like a brute. Some day,—it's a wild, futile hope, I know,—but some day I may have the right to tell you all about myself—and to tell you something else that means far more to me. If——"

The tiny cathedral chime of the clock in the adjoining library interrupted him.

"Half-past nine," he muttered. "Good-night, Miss Ward. You are to be at the Meredith dinner to-morrow evening? So am I. May the fates incite Mrs. Meredith to send me in to dinner with you!"

The fates incited Mrs. Meredith to place Keith and Mae at opposite sides of the table.

Mae was not sorry to be placed so far away from Keith. She now made no secret to herself of her love for the mysterious senior. From his broken words of the preceding night she knew he cared for her. Anxious as she had been to see him again, a certain unwonted shyness now made her glad that the table separated them.

The dinner was strictly informal. Mrs. Meredith prided herself on doing things with Bohemian informality, and was always leading her coterie through a dreary succession of welsh-rarebit suppers, impromptu excursions to Chinatown, "at homes" where men were allowed to smoke, and a dozen other abominations of the sort without which no rich man (or woman) may enter the Kingdom of Bohemia.

"Please hurry over the cigars," she enjoined her husband, as she and the other women rose from the table. "We are all going somewhere this evening. We haven't decided where. We're going to wait till you men come in before voting on it. Mr. Keith tells me he has an engagement at half-after nine, but I count on having all the rest of you join us."

When Keith took his leave at nine-thirty the question as to where the remainder of the evening should be spent was still in doubt. Two factions were hotly discussing the rival claims of Koster & Bial's and of Proctor's.

As Keith left the drawing-room his eyes rested for one moment on Mae Ward,—he had had no opportunity of speaking alone with her that evening,—and he surprised on her face a look that told him more than any words could have expressed. Angered that her heart could be so easily read, she turned with assumed interest to the discussion in hand.

Little Benton a minute later settled the dispute.

"I've got a better idea than going to Proctor's or Koster's," he de-

clared. "What's the matter with doing some slumming? Let's go down to the Bowery Music Hall. It's somewhere near Rivington Street, I believe. We can get a couple of boxes and be guyed by the actors. There'll be a rank show, of course; but it'll be fun to watch the gentle Bowery Boy at play."

"Besides," cut in Hammond, "about fifty of our freshmen have gotten up a slumming party for to-night. They're almost sure to drop in there for a few minutes sometime during the evening, and when they do, look out for fun. There'll be a regular 'Town and Gown' row when the Boweryites resent the Columbia cheers breaking in on the show. Our boxes will be first-rate arena seats. I, for one, vote for the Bowery Music Hall scheme. It's a bird."

The idea took like wildfire. Five minutes later the party were on their way down town.

At the Bowery Music Hall a stout man whose hair smelt like a team of musk-oxen ushered the Meredith party into two stage-boxes. The stage was occupied by a lady of obese build and very yellow hair, and by a man with Dutch make-up and a red-and-green checked suit.

Soon the stage was cleared for the next "specialty."

"Let's see," mused Hammond, consulting his programme. "That was number six—'McGibben and Cohen, side-splitting sketch team!' The next is 'The Great Millicent!' I wonder if the great Millicent is a dog, a bird, or a patent medicine. Whoever it is, he or she is evidently a favorite. See, the name is in letters twice as big as any of the others on the programme, and the crowd is clapping itself black in the face in anticipation."

The piano which served as an orchestra struck up a lively air, and "The Great Millicent" hopped lightly on the stage amid a salvo of applause.

He was dressed in a coarse travesty of an African explorer's costume.

A huge green umbrella hid the upper half of his body. Capacious boots reached almost up to his waist.

He tossed the umbrella, whirling, upward towards the flies. As it came down it turned over, and the Great Millicent caught the point deftly on the tip of his nose. Spinning the umbrella about on this somewhat unusual base and tossing his pith helmet into the wings, he began to sing,—

"I have crossed through lands Hebraic,
I have cursed in tongues archaic."

Mae Ward, who had watched the stage with growing disgust from the back of the box, now leaned forward, her face set and blanched, and her eyes fixed on the performer with questioning horror.

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The lower part of the Great Millicent's face was hidden in bushy scarlet whiskers. A pair of huge smoked goggles covered his eyes. A fiery nose six inches long further disguised him. But to the eyes of love efficient disguises are few.

As Bernard Keith reached the middle of the third stanza his glance fell on the box party, and at last met that of Mae Ward.

The recognition was mutual, but there was scarce a break in Keith's voice as he went on to the end of the song.

"They say that Millicent feller gets seventy-five dollars a week just for singin' a song or two down here every night," commented a Bowery youth to his gaudy "ladifriend" so audibly that Mae Ward in the box just above their heads heard him plainly.

A shout of applause followed the song, and would not die down until the pianist recommenced the prelude.

Mingled with the clapping, yells, and approving whistles rose a sound that brought the men in the box party to their feet.

It was the sharp, barking cheer,—

"'RAY! 'RAY! 'RAY! C-O-L-U-M-B-I-A!" followed by the name, "MILlicent!"

The college cry, coming in unison from fifty trained throats, cut through the looser volume of applause like a knife.

The whole audience turned to see whence it came.

There, at the back of the house, were massed the body of slumming freshmen, with a mingling of upper-class men. They had entered while Keith was singing.

"The Great Millicent" had opened his mouth to begin his encore selection. At sound of the familiar cheer he started as though shot.

He had again thrown his umbrella high into the flies and was awaiting its descent as the Columbians' greeting reached his ears.

Unnoted by him, the huge umbrella fell. Before he could recover himself its ribs raked his face. The umbrella fell to the stage and rolled to the footlights, carrying on its steel rib-points the singer's false beard. Smoked glasses and red nose were alike knocked off by the blow.

Keith whirled about, facing the back of the stage, but not before a voice from among the mass of Columbians shouted in amazement:

"Good Lord! It's Keith, '93!"

"It's Keith!" echoed Hammond from the stage-box.

"Ah, g'wan!" snarled a tough from the centre of the house.

"Dat's de Great Millicent."

But his interruption went unheard. The collegians had broken into a yell of astonishment mingled with derision.

The great asbestos curtain, with its gaudily painted advertisements, swept downward with a rattle and swish, shutting off all view of the stage and its occupant.

In the two boxes holding the Meredith party not a word had been spoken since Hammond's involuntary exclamation. For a full minute silence lasted. Then Mrs. Meredith said constrainedly,—

"So the 'mystery' is explained!"

"I'm afraid I can't agree with you," answered little Long. "To me the real mystery is just beginning."

"I don't understand," said Mrs. Meredith. "What is the mystery now?"

"Simply this: Keith is the whitest, best chap I ever knew. If he were a common music-hall singer and had imposed himself on us he'd have been a cad of the first water. And that's just what Bernard Keith is not. What is he, then, and why has he done this? There's the mystery."

"It's a mystery I'm going to unravel, then," announced Hammond, rising.

"What are you going to do?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"I'm going 'behind' to speak to him. I'm going to hear his own version of the story."

"I'll go with you," said Long and Varian in a breath.

"I don't think we'll stay here any longer," remarked Mrs. Meredith, dusting her wrap with one gloved hand. "We spoke of going up to Sherry's for supper. Will you join us there when you've had your interview with Mr. Keith?"

"And if I was right in my estimate of him, may I bring him along?" asked little Long.

Mrs. Meredith hesitated.

"Mr. Long," said Mae Ward, speaking for the first time, "when you see Mr. Keith would you mind reminding him that he has promised to call on me to-morrow night, to help me on those songs for the 'Strollers'?"

Long, Hammond, and Varian paid an usher a dollar to take their names to Keith.

They found him seated on the one stool of his grimy little dressing-room. It was a six-by-eight apartment. Its furniture, besides the stool, consisted of a table covered with "make-up" appliances, a cracked mirror, a row of clothes-hooks, and a gas-jet shrouded in wire. Keith had removed his make-up and wig. His calm, classic face crowned oddly the grotesque dress which he still wore.

"Well," he said curtly, "what do you want?"

"A lot of things," answered Long easily. "First of all, we want to congratulate you on your performance. It was great."

The anger in Keith's face changed to puzzled suspicion. He made no reply.

"Look here, old chap," said Varian, "we haven't come here like

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Job's comforters, or to spy, or anything like that. We're your friends. You owe us the truth, you know."

"The debt will be outlawed, I'm afraid, before you can collect it," returned Keith. "And now, if you've nothing more to say——"

"But I have something more to say," interposed Long, calmly refusing to take the hint implied in Keith's last words. "I've a message for you."

"Oh, I can take my *congé* for granted," said Keith wearily. "You needn't put it in words."

"It was scarcely a *congé*," answered little Long. "It was from Miss Ward. Do you want to hear it?"

Keith nodded sullenly.

"She wished me to remind you that you had promised to call on her to-morrow night," said Long.

Keith rose abruptly and began to arrange some of the clothing on the hooks. His back was to his classmates.

"I was a boor," he said presently. "Excuse me, won't you? Sit down. Oh, I forgot, you can't,—there's only one stool. Never mind, you won't object to standing. I'm sorry I was such a brute when you fellows came in. I had an idea you came from curiosity, and I was sore. If you want the truth I'm ready to give it to you."

"Wait a second," interposed Varian. "Before you begin I want to tell you that we all three believe in you, and that we only ask an explanation for the sake of the rest of the people who have learned to like you this last year."

"Thank you," said Keith simply.

"Let her go," adjured little Long. "We're listening."

"I'll make it as short as I can," began Keith. "In the first place, my name isn't Keith at all. It's Bernard Fairfax."

"Any relation to General Bernard Fairfax, the Boston railroad king?" interrupted Hammond.

"He's my father," replied Keith. "I was in my junior year at Harvard. My father had ideas about college extravagance and kept me on what I chose to think was a meagre allowance. I wanted more money. I was a member of the Glee Club, and I'd been in some of their vaudeville shows. I had made a hit, and it struck me I might earn extra money that way. I went to the manager of the Lyceum Music Hall in Boston. He liked my work and promised me an engagement. The papers learned my real name and there was a big sensation. Some papers took the line that a scion of Mayflower stock had broken the bonds of society and had struck out for himself. Others published sensational stories of how my father's annual income was over one million dollars, and yet he was so stingy that his only son must seek a living on the vaudeville stage."

"Must have pleased General Fairfax!" commented Hammond.

"He was furious," answered Keith, "as he had a right to be. I think it was the slur about his so-called meanness that hurt him most; but the stain on the family name was a fearful blow too. We had a scene I shall never forget. At the end of it I left home. My father's will was law in our set, and society cut me dead. I drifted to New York, disgusted with society and with everything else. I had to make a living somehow. The only thing I could do was vaudeville. I got an engagement down here and somehow made a hit. But I hated it. I longed for my own sphere again, and wanted to study some profession. With that idea I went to Columbia. You fellows were good to me. You took me in. You asked me to your homes. I ought to have confessed then. But I imagined if I did I'd get the same treatment I had after my break with my father."

"You were dead wrong!" broke in little Long.

"Perhaps. But I dared not risk it."

"But your father?"

"I hear of him now and then. In fact, he is an intimate friend of Judge Ward, Miss Ward's father. He always stays at their house when he is in New York. I almost met him there once. From what I know of him he'll never forgive me. So why should I think about him any more? And yet," he finished, under his breath, "I do."

The three visitors glanced at each other in silence.

"Miss Ward told me this evening," Keith went on, "that General Fairfax is coming to New York to-morrow to visit them for a week. So you see, Long, why I can't call there."

"Look here," broke out Varian, "I've got an idea. Will you leave this business in our hands?"

"But what can you do?"

"Never mind what I can do. Will you put yourself in our hands?"

"Yes. But——"

"Then go to Miss Ward's to-morrow night,—unless you hear from me to the contrary before then."

"I can't. I'd——"

"You've promised."

"Well, I'm in your hands, I suppose. But——"

"Never mind the 'buts.' Good-night, old man."

Hammond took Miss Ward home that evening. Late as it was, he had gone into the house, and for a solid hour was closeted with Judge Ward and herself.

General Fairfax reached the Ward house just in time for lunch. Judge and General were enjoying a post-prandial smoke in the former's study an hour or so later, when a little sheaf of cards was brought up.

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"Show them in here," ordered the Judge. "No, Fairfax, don't go. I particularly want you to stay." Puzzled, the General sank back in his big leather chair as four young men filed into the room.

They were the trio who had visited Keith, and Harry Stanford, '93, Arts.

One by one they were introduced to the General. Then they stood hesitating, silent.

"You wished to see me, gentlemen?" said the Judge pleasantly. "Sit down, please. What can I do for you?"

"We want to consult you, sir, on a matter where your legal skill may help us," said Long. "It's about young Keith, '93. You know him, I think?"

"Very well indeed. What about him?"

"He's in a good bit of trouble," said Hammond. "You know Keith is the best fellow living. He is a splendid student, an honorable, straightforward fellow in every way. It seems his mother and he had words on some point they'd probably have laughed at another time,—one that hurt the pride more than the honor. The son, smarting under what he thought was injustice, left home. Everybody he knew gave him the cold shoulder. He was literally cast on the world without a dollar, without a friend. Now, that's where another man would have gone to pieces, but Keith was made of different stuff. He found work—not, perhaps, such work as his family would have approved, but honest, clean employment, for all that. Then he set about finishing his college course. He worked his way to the very head of his class by sheer pluck and hard study, keeping up his other employment at the same time. Why, I've known times, around examination week, when that man has worked twenty hours out of the twenty-four; and through it all, no word of complaint at the mother who cast him off; no railing at his hard luck. I tell you that's the stuff they make heroes of! Don't you agree with me, General?"

"I do indeed!" responded Fairfax emphatically.

"Now, here's the point," cut in Stanford, taking up the tale. "Keith has shown what he is made of; he's proved he can make his own living and go through college at the same time,—not an easy job, by the way,—and, in short, he's shown he's independent. But down in his heart he has a great big homesickness for his mother, for the family he was forced to leave because of a silly college prank. He wants to be reconciled to his mother. He wants to go home. He's proved it isn't her money or social position he wants, but just herself. We, who are interested in him, came to you to see if you can't advise us—to see if you can't suggest some way to reconcile them. Can't you?"

"I'm afraid not," said the Judge harshly. "A man who breaks loose from his family—who by some piece of wanton folly grieves a

parent to the extent you say young Keith did—deserves all the loneliness and hardship he gets. He need not hope—he has no right to hope—for a reconciliation. General Fairfax here will agree with me.”

“I will not!” rapped out the General. “I most assuredly will not! If a legal training gives a man that view of life, then I thank Heaven I never went into the law! Do you mean, sir, to say that any mother could hear such an account of her boy as these young men have just given without a thrill of pride that God had blessed her with such a son? Whatever his early offence, he has atoned for it. I beg, Judge, that you will use all your power to bring about this reconciliation.”

“I’ll do my best,” assented the Judge, “but I doubt if I can succeed.”

“I am certain you will,” rejoined the General, “and if this young—what did you say his name was?”

“His name is Fairfax, General,” said little Long,—“Bernard Fairfax.”

The General sprang to his feet in anger. Then he sat down again and, with one hand shading his eyes, rested his elbow on the chair-arm and looked long into the blazing grate-fire.

The Judge and the Columbians were mute.

At length the General raised his head.

“Where is he?” he asked.

“He will call here this evening,” said Judge Ward gently.

“This evening!” echoed the General, once more on his feet. “Do you think I am going to wait five mortal hours before seeing my boy? Take me to his rooms at once, gentlemen,” turning almost fiercely to the four collegians.

When Bernard Fairfax called that evening his father’s arm was linked in his.

But when, a little later, Bernard finished asking the question he had begun when he had called on Mae Ward two nights before, his father was in another room, quite out of hearing.

And her reply delighted the questioner’s father almost as much as it did Bernard himself.



RETURNING GUESTS

BY CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

WHEN Joy goes forth and leaves us desolate,
We plead for her return, ofttimes in vain;
Yet oh, how soon unto the heart’s closed gate
Comes back, unbid, her sad-faced sister, Pain!

THE MEN WHO SIGNED

By Lora S. La Mance



THE Second Continental Congress, that adopted the Declaration of Independence on the Fourth of July, 1776, was an extraordinary body. The greatest wealth, the best brains, and the truest patriotism of the colonies formed its personnel. No wonder that the great English statesman, Chatham, in his admiration conceded that "for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under such a complication of circumstances, no nation or body of men stand in preference to the general Congress at Philadelphia." If such was the English verdict, it was natural that the American people should ever after have delighted in heaping honors upon the "Immortal Fifty-six." Of those who survived the Revolutionary War, scarcely a man but was elected Senator, Congressman, Supreme Judge, Governor, or President.

Ten of the signers died before the conclusion of peace. During the progress of the war the thoughts of the nation were rather with the soldier than the statesman. Of George Ross, Thomas Lynch, Joseph Hewes, and John Morton, who died during this time, we know little. Cæsar Rodney was a major-general, and held high State honors before his death. Livingston, because of his family's prominence and his great wealth, is also a familiar name to us. The strong personality and immense wealth of George Taylor also make him a well-known figure, although he died five years after the signing of the Declaration. He was a self-made man. He was born in Ireland and came to this country at twenty, working at first as a day laborer in the foundry that he afterwards owned. He rose rapidly, and for many years was at the head of the iron industry of Pennsylvania.

John Hart did not live to see the close of the war. The later years of his life he was hunted like a fox by the Tories through the swamps and woods of New Jersey. Richard Stockton was taken prisoner by the British, thrown into the common jail of New York City, and treated with such severity that his health was undermined and he died from the effects of it. Button Gwinnett's death completes the list of the ten who died during the Revolutionary War. His was an odd name and a unique history. He was a wealthy Englishman of thirty-eight

when, in 1770, he came to America. At once he espoused the colonies' cause against his native country, and so zealously that six years after his arrival he signed the Declaration as a Georgia delegate. Button Gwinnett was a rather choleric fellow, and the next year, 1777, he quarrelled with general McIntosh over some military affair, and the outcome was a duel in which he was mortally wounded.

Gwinnett and Taylor were by no means the only delegates of foreign birth. Robert Morris was an Englishman, John Witherspoon and James Wilson were born in Scotland, Matthew Thornton and James Smith were from Ireland, and Francis Lewis from Wales. These eight of foreign birth formed a by no means insignificant group among the Declaration's signers. James Smith was the least forcible of this number. James Wilson was an early and strong patriot. He was much esteemed for his

John Hancock
Sam^l Adams Phil. Livingston
Rob^t Treat Paine
John Adams Fran^c Lewis
Elbridge Gerry
Josiah Bartlett Rich^d Stockton
Sam^l Huntington
Step^r Hopkins John Hart
Abra^m Clark Lewis Morris
John Morton
Matthew Thornton
John Penn
Roger Sherman
Wm Whipple Jas Witherspoon
William Ellery Wm Hooper
Claver Wolcott Rob^t Morris
Benjⁿ Franklin Wm Williams
Wm Paca
Loat^r Hepkinson Tho^s Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton
Mr Jefferson Geo Taylor
Edward Rutledge Joseph Hewes
Jas Smith Geo^r Ross
Geoff^r Symes Thom^s Mifflin
Button Gwinnett John Adams
James Wilson John Hancock
Thomas Lynch John Adams
Samuel Chase George Wythe
Benjamin Rives Elyman Hall
Richard Henry Lee
Arthur Middleton Tho^s Nelson
Casar Rodney Carter Braxton
Benjⁿ Harrison Geo Walton
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Tho^s Mifflin Jun^r

The Men who Signed

rugged Scotch sense, and for nine years before his death was one of the United States Supreme Judges. Matthew Thornton, doctor and lawyer, was one of the Supreme Judges of his adopted State, New Hampshire.

Perhaps the most picturesque figure of the assembly was John Witherspoon, the one clergyman of that body. He was fifty-four that Independence year, and in the full prime of his Scottish vigor. During the six years he sat in Congress he always wore the full clerical garb. But whatever his dress, his tongue was that of an uncompromising fighter. He was so staunch a liberalist, and so strong a believer in the righteousness of the American cause, that, parson though he was, he was an active member of the Board of War, and frequently visited the troops to study means to secure their greater efficiency. After the war he was a college president, and wrote religious and philosophical works. He was a fine Greek and Latin scholar, and did as earnest work for education as he had once done for law-making and war. Witherspoon was totally blind for two years before his death, which occurred at the age of seventy-two.

Robert Morris rendered inestimable service to his adopted country by putting his own private fortune into the breach in those early days when the infant nation was in the closest of financial straits. The one million five hundred thousand dollars which made it possible for Washington to carry on the campaign against Lord Cornwallis was raised entirely upon his own personal security. For the most trying eight years of our history this noble man stood at the monetary helm of our government and guided it through many perils. Years after, in his old age, unfortunate land speculations ruined him. His creditors demanded immediate payment. His country could have saved Morris by paying back a tithe of what he had freely given to it in its time of need. This was not done. To our lasting disgrace, he was thrown into a debtor's prison and died there, an old man of seventy-two.

Francis Lewis began his career in this country as a merchant. During the French and Indian War he did such notable service that England made him a grant of five thousand acres of land. Nineteen years after this he signed the Declaration of Independence, and in reprisal he and his loyal wife were imprisoned a long time and most of his property confiscated. Like the sturdy old Welshman that he was, he lived to an advanced age, dying at ninety.

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Besides Witherspoon and Wilson, there passed away between the close of the Revolutionary War and the year 1800 twenty-three of the Declaration's signers, leaving but twenty-two of the band alive. Of

those who died during this period, Lewis Morris, William Hooper, George Read, Abraham Clark, William Whipple, Lyman Hall, Carter Braxton, Thomas Stone, and John Penn, though all popular in their day, and nearly all honored by office, leave records of small interest behind them. The spirit that animated these founders of a republic is shown in the case of Lewis Morris. He lived in affluence upon the three-thousand-acre estate of Morrisania. A British force was stationed near him. Nevertheless he signed the Declaration without faltering, and promptly experienced having his estates ravaged and his family driven away in retaliation for his action. Arthur Middleton also had his property confiscated, and suffered imprisonment because of his public attitude. His imprisonment probably hastened his death, which occurred near the close of the war.

Francis Hopkinson was the first pupil of the College of Pennsylvania, founded by Benjamin Franklin. He was at once a lawyer and a poet, doing especially good work for the Revolutionary cause by his telling satires in verse. Oliver Wolcott, Samuel Huntington, and Benjamin Harrison were all popular Governors of their respective States, serving term after term. William Paca, Senator and afterwards Chief-Justice of Maryland, was another strong man of his day, though, like that of the others, his fame is now dimmed. Benjamin Harrison is the best remembered of any of these. Later generations have never forgotten that he was the father of one President and great-grandfather of another—a case of fame working backward.

Stephen Hopkins was a remarkable man. Merchant, ship-builder, and lawyer, at twenty-five he was member of the Assembly and at forty-six Chief-Justice. He was five times made Governor of Rhode Island. He established the first town library in Providence, wrote valuable political and historical works, and yet is remembered less for all this than for having signed the Declaration of Independence in such a remarkably tremulous hand that his is one of the first names that catches the eye. A fantastic trick of fame, indeed, to pass by the life-work of this man and mark him out for distinction because of a nervous affection that palsied his hand!



Benjamin Franklin died in 1790, aged eighty-four. How is it possible in a paragraph to do justice to this man, honored in all lands and the pride of his own? Author, speaker, politician, diplomat, scientist and inventor, philosopher and proverb-maker, a practical mechanic and printer, the winner of gold medals and of many college degrees, he was a man who could adapt himself alike to the day-laborer or the throned king. We are reaping to-day the benefit of his wisdom and statesmanship.

The Men who Signed

Three years after Franklin's death John Hancock, who as president of the Second Continental Congress had relied so steadily upon Franklin's aid to secure the passage of the Declaration, followed him to the grave. Well was he named John! There was in his nature something of the lofty self-abnegation of John the Baptist and the fiery impetuosity of the Apostle John when in his early manhood the Christ Himself surnamed him Boanerges, "the son of thunder." Wealthy and influential, he counted this as nothing in the balance against his country's interests. He was outspoken and daring in his speech. At twenty-nine he was a member of Massachusetts' colonial Legislature. This was ten years before independence was declared, but already a spirit of discontent was extant, and John Hancock boldly fanned this spirit into a flame of disloyalty. He called a spade a spade. There was no fear of *lèse majesté* before his eyes, and thinking the King of England a tyrant, he said so. Naturally he became a marked man.

At thirty-one a sloop belonging to him was seized by officers of the crown because he had named it "Liberty." In the riot that followed these officers were roughly handled, and Hancock, of course, received the blame of it. Two years later, in the spring of 1770, over the dead bodies of the four victims of what is known as the Boston Massacre, Hancock delivered a powerful address of wonderful eloquence and boldness. From this hour the British government considered him in no other light than that of an arch-traitor. The march to Lexington and Concord, that brought on hostilities, was undertaken by the British fully as much from the hope they entertained of getting possession of the persons of John Hancock and Samuel Adams as to secure the military stores at Concord. From then on these men were publicly posted as traitors and a price put on their heads.

Hancock made a good presiding officer, though the necessary restrictions as to partisanship that attended the office were galling to his soul. The Revolution owed much to his skill in appointing committees and in steering matters. He was the first to sign the Declaration, and his bold, heavy, inky-black signature is a character-study in itself. There is dash and fire, frankness and firmness in it, and the tremendous flourish at its close shows ready wit, firm nerve, and sure execution. Hancock was Governor of Massachusetts many terms. He left most of his fortune to colleges and for benevolent purposes.

Roger Sherman died in 1793, the same year as Hancock. Shoemaker, surveyor, lawyer, storekeeper, Mayor, Congressman, Judge and Supreme Judge, Senator, member of the Committee of Declaration and of the Boards of War and Ordnance, he disproved the old proverb about Jack-of-all-trades by being a success at all. He was sagacious, practical, and of quickest wit. Senator Randolph, proud both of his aristocratic birth and of having the blood of the Indian Princess, Pocahontas, in

his veins, despised Sherman because of his lowly origin. Once when the latter was speaking he interrupted him:

"Can the Senator from Connecticut tell me," piped he in his shrill, sarcastic voice, "what he did with his leather shoemaker's apron when he came to the Senate?"

Quick as a flash came the answer, "I cut it up to make moccasins for the Indian Senator from Virginia!"

Josiah Bartlett was one of the three physicians in that Congress. He was the first to sign his name after Hancock, as he was also the first member to vote for the Declaration. Indeed, all of his life he was a man of first things. He was the first doctor in New Hampshire to use Peruvian bark in his practice. Like Roger Sherman, he was a self-made man, and a man who could do many things and do each well. He was a physician and president of the State Medical Society, a member of the Committee of Safety, a justice of the peace, colonel of a regiment, member of the Provincial and later of the Continental Congress, Judge, Supreme Judge, and Chief-Justice, and Governor of the State. In his sixty-six years he did a dozen ordinary men's work, and died regretted by all.

Thomas Nelson did for Virginia what Robert Morris did for the nation—saved the State from bankruptcy by devoting to her use his large fortune. When he was in command of the State militia at Yorktown the exigencies of the situation seemed to require the destruction of a certain large and imposing building. He did not hesitate to give the order to bombard it, although the house was his own and by far the handsomest building in the place. It is sad to know that this gallant Virginia Congressman and Governor was so embarrassed by the loans that he had made to his State to pay its regiments when there was no money in the treasury, that in his last days his remaining property was sold to pay his debts. He was but fifty-one when he died, worn out by anxieties and years of ill-health.

The two Lees died within three years of each other. They were both from Virginia and kinsmen. Each was weighty in council. Francis Lightfoot Lee was a warm personal friend of Washington's. He was a practical, solid man rather than a brilliant one. When the terms of peace were under consideration he was long-sighted enough to insist upon the right to the navigation of the Mississippi and to fish on the coast of Newfoundland. He died two years before his old friend, Washington.

Richard Henry Lee was of an altogether different temperament. He was the hardest-working man that perhaps has ever been in any Congress. He did more than any other member to convert the stubborn

conservative element of the Second Continental Congress into revolutionists. He laid plans and pulled wires; he coaxed, persuaded, argued, drew up resolutions, conceded where concession would do, smoothed over difficulties, and combated prejudices. Yet he stood like a rock for the principles of liberty, and put an amount of fire, vim, and push in his advocacy of these principles that staggered his opponents. His very pulses beat for liberty, and his was the voice that introduced the resolution that declared the colonies "free and independent States" and "absolved from all allegiance to the British crown." He supported that resolution by one of the most noble bursts of oratory, that went straight to the hearts of all that heard it because so manifestly straight from his own. By a vote of seven to six the colonies endorsed his resolution, and the Declaration of Independence was ordered forthwith to be drawn up. His State delighted to honor him and sent him first back to Congress, then to the Senate. Owing to ill-health he could take little active part, and at last retired altogether. He died at the age of sixty.

The ranks of the signers were much thinned now. I have been unable to find the exact date of the death of Thomas Heyward, but think he died previous to 1810. If so, the little band lacked but one of being reduced one-half within ten years from 1800. Sketches have already been given of Smith, Morris, Thornton, and Lewis, who were all foreign-born. There is nothing of special interest to add of Walton or Heyward. There is as little to add of Edward Rutledge, save that he was confined a prisoner for nearly a year and his health ruined thereby. He was Governor of South Carolina when he died. Thomas Lynch and Rutledge were the youngest members of the Congress, each of them being but twenty-seven years old when he signed the Declaration.

George Wythe was born to great wealth and was given a fine education. He was an ambitious and noted lawyer and wrote works upon the law. Thomas Jefferson studied law under him. He was fifty years old when he signed the Declaration, and had been for twenty continuous years a member of the Virginia Assembly. For ten years he was a professor in William and Mary College. He freed all of his slaves and supported them until they could take care of themselves. He died at eighty from the taking of poison.

Samuel Adams died at eighty also. He was poor in worldly goods, but rich in honor and respect. Irving says of this patriot, who with Hancock shared the honor of being posted as a traitor, that he was "clear in judgment, calm in conduct, inflexible in resolution, and infallible in all points of constitutional law." His kinsman, John Adams, summed up his character in much the same manner. "He is zealous, ardent, and keen; he is always for softness, delicacy, and prudence

when they will do, but is stanch and stiff and strict and rigid and inflexible in the cause." Samuel Adams was a blue-eyed and sandy-haired man, striking in his bearing and deportment. Though always poor, he was always proud, always dignified. He liked to wear the cocked hat, tie-wig, and red cloak of a smartly dressed man of his day. After an honorable but stormy life he sank peacefully to rest.

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Within the next ten years all but four of the signers had answered Death's roll-call. Of those who died, Samuel Chase, William Williams, William Ellery, and George Clymer, though honored men, were not particularly conspicuous ones. Robert Treat Paine, first a minister of the gospel and then a lawyer, rounded out eighty-three years of a busy, useful life. He received many honors, but on account of deafness had to resign his Supreme Judgeship ten years before his death. Elbridge Gerry was one of Massachusetts' favorite sons, he being both Congressman and Governor. He was Vice-President of the United States when he died, being the second Vice-President to die in office.

Benjamin Rush was one of the most advanced physicians in his day. He wrote much on medical and other topics. He was so kind of heart that he regularly gave one-seventh of his income to charity. He was surgeon-general of the army and planned the first dispensary in the country. Dr. Rush's practice was so great that he sometimes treated a hundred and twenty patients in a day, prescribing often at meal-time when not another moment could be obtained of leisure. He was particularly successful in treating yellow fever, and in one epidemic, where he was placed at the head of the Medical Board, he is credited with having saved over six thousand lives. He was another of the young men among the signers, being but thirty-one at that time. He also had the honor of organizing the first Anti-Slavery Society.

Thomas McKean was a lawyer for full sixty years, and was considered an authority in all matters of jurisprudence. He was the author of the State Constitution of Delaware. He was a member of the State Assembly seventeen years, of Congress nine years, was twelve years Chief-Justice of Pennsylvania, and eight years Governor of the same State. He died at eighty-three, having spent nearly all of his adult life in the public service.

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The close of the year 1820 found but four of the signers still living, William Floyd, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Charles Carroll. The last named of these alone witnessed the dawning of the next decade.

William Floyd according to some accounts was eighty-seven and

The Men who Signed

according to others ninety-two years old when he died. He was a man of resolution and action. He was a member of the First Continental Congress when an English fleet appeared off Long Island with the intention of ravaging it. At once he left Philadelphia, crossed over into Suffolk County, New York, and quickly raised a body of militia, offering such a show of resistance that the British withdrew their fleet. He returned then to his legislative duties. He was a general in the war that followed. He was prominent in public life for many years.

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were two of the brightest men in that notable body, the Second Continental Congress. Together they worked for independence, together they served on the committee to draw up the Declaration, and for more than a dozen years after were the closest confidants and friends. Political differences, alas! separated them, and their close friendship was replaced by the bitterest animosity. Both became Presidents, and strong Presidents, of the country they had done so much to bring into existence. But so sharp was the estrangement between these now gray-haired rivals, that, upon Jefferson succeeding Adams in office, the latter, late at night of his last day as President, appointed and signed the commissions of a number of judges that Congress had just created sooner than let Jefferson select men of his own way of thinking for these important offices. The slur of "midnight judges" was long attached to those thus elevated. On the day of inauguration Adams left the city rather than see the oath administered to his old comrade. This foolish and unfortunate quarrel is the greatest stain on the memory of these two intellectual giants at this day. They repented it themselves after years had passed, renewed their friendship, and corresponded from then until death. Death came to both on the fiftieth anniversary of that historical Fourth of July when both had so firmly and proudly signed the Declaration of Independence. When Adams felt the death-dew coming upon his forehead he thought lovingly of his old comrade, already dead, though Adams knew it not. "Jefferson still lives!" he said. A little later he murmured, "Independence forever!" and expired.

Thomas Jefferson wanted as his highest praise an inscription on his monument that he was the author of the Declaration of Independence. It was glory enough for one man, but by no means all that Jefferson had to his credit. "Jefferson is always prompt, frank, explicit, and decisive," said John Adams admiringly in speaking of Jefferson's work for independence. He never made long speeches, but his every word carried weight. He alone drew up the celebrated document, his colleagues on the Declaration Committee finding it so faultless that with the exception of one paragraph that was dropped, and the change of a word here and there, it was left exactly as he presented

it for their inspection. All of his life he was a recognized leader. His ideas were broadly democratic. Though wealthy and the owner of a large estate, he led the reform that caused Virginia to abolish entail. He championed simplicity, and advised the freeing of all slaves by the year 1800. Alas for the nation that it would not follow his views on the last! He was one of the most capable men that ever filled the Presidential chair, and after his retirement to private life he did much for education and his beloved Virginia University. He loved Monticello, his home, with a passion few men feel for their abode. He planted and adorned its grounds, laid out roads, and stocked it. It was a park, a flower-garden, and a gentleman's estate all in one. As for the mansion, he planned and built, designed and ornamented it as enthusiastically. His hospitality was extended on a grand scale. He loved his friends, his wife, his child. His wife died many years before him. His generous mode of life impoverished him, and beautiful Monticello was lost to his daughter. Was this what he feared when he uttered his last words, "I resign my soul to God, and my daughter to my country"?

John Adams was brain—all brain. His father gave him a thorough education, but beyond that was not able to help him. But the ambitious lawyer and politician pushed himself along rapidly. At twenty-nine he married Abigail Smith, the brightest and deepest thinker that has ever been elevated to the high position of the "first lady of the land." She had a great influence on the already ambitious, already rising young man. She was as radical as himself. She believed in equal rights for men and women, serf and king. Womanly, gracious, yet firm and prophet-like of vision, she keyed her husband up to highest courage and daring. All the time he was working so hard in Congress for independence, she wrote helpful, inspiring letters. At her knees was a bright, thoughtful child, John Quincy Adams, nine years old the month that his father signed the Declaration, and later to be a President as his father was before him. It was said of John Adams that he had "the clearest head and firmest heart of any man in Congress." Afterwards as diplomat, statesman, and President he filled difficult places with marked ability, extravagantly praised by his admirers and as extravagantly denounced by those who differed from him. John Adams had a tall, commanding figure, a well-shaped head, and a wide, expansive forehead, a friendly eye, and a courteous smile and manner. He was nearly ninety-one when he died.

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November 14, 1832, the last of the Declaration's signers died, in his ninety-sixth year. Charles Carroll was a gentleman, a scholar, and a patriot. Though he never aspired to be a leader, his firm stand for

independence could not but have an important influence from his many substantial qualities and the power that he wielded as the wealthiest man in the united colonies. When a man is willing to risk millions for the cause he believes in, other men are inspired to risk their moderate fortunes also. No family was more respected, no men more courteous, than the Carrolls. The son of this very Charles Carroll was a persevering suitor for the hand of Miss Nelly Custis, Mrs. Washington's granddaughter, and although the young lady subsequently married a Mr. Lewis, it was to her grandmother's disappointment, for she esteemed the Carrolls highly. Charles Carroll served his State and country for many years. His last public act was the laying of a corner-stone on the Fourth of July, 1828, when nearly ninety-one.

To this chivalrous and high-minded old gentleman was given the distinction of being the last survivor of the historical fifty-six. His great age brings us to point out the singular fact that twenty-four of the signers—nearly one-half—lived to the age of seventy or over. Fourteen lived on until eighty or beyond, and no less than five to be ninety or more. We do not know of another representative body of men that affords so many examples of longevity. In morals, in intellect, in courage, in patriotism, and in hale, long lives, no assembly ever stood higher than the Second Continental Congress that gave liberty to the American people.



A CRIMSON KISS

BY ALICE E. ALLEN

HE was a bold carnation,
And she a sweet, shy rose;
He was as red as warm, red wine,
She, white as winter snows;
He lived beside the window,
His home a jardinière;
Hers, just above his ardent reach,
A vase of Sèvres-ware.

He grew till close beside her
He bent his regal head;
She trembled just a little,
But listened while he said,
"I've dreamed, while climbing upward,
Of this one moment's bliss,"
Then pressed upon her petals pure
One long, sweet, crimson kiss.

The winsome rose blushed deeply,
And whispered, sweet and low:
"I've waited all my lifetime, dear,
For this one hour, I know.
My bold carnation lover,
King of all flowers thou art,
I'll keep the kiss thou gavest me
Forever in my heart!"

That evening, in the twilight,
My Lady Leonore
Swept, smiling, through her parlor—
A silken gown she wore.
She bent above the blossom
Her queenly, golden head,
Then called, "Why, Jack, my white,
white rose,
Has changed to burning red!"

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

“A remarkable book. The strongest novel the season has produced,” says the *Pall Mall Gazette* (London) concerning “Jack Raymond.” And a critical reading of the tale more than justifies such praise.

The book is in reality a searching study of the diverse characters of Jack Raymond and his uncle and guardian, the Rev. Mr. Raymond, incumbent of a small parish on the Cornish coast. When we first meet Jack he labors under the imputation of being inherently and incurably bad. “It’s no use our trying to hide the skeleton in our family cupboard away from you,” said the Vicar, turning to his visitor with a sigh. “It has been forced upon your notice against our will. . . . Unhappily it is not mere childish naughtiness that we have to contend with in my nephew; it is an inherent evil disposition. . . . Jack inherits from his mother a character which seems incapable of reform, its vices are so deeply rooted. Neither persuasion nor firmness has any effect upon him; after years of care and earnest efforts to arouse some glimmering of better feelings, he grows steadily worse and worse.”

But the author is careful to show us that, despite appearances, Jack is not bad, and that his wickedness is but little more than naughtiness, the result of injudicious treatment, rather than of the inherent vice his guardian was disposed to blame for his misdeeds. For the boy’s temperament was of the sort that rebels against needless restrictions; and as setting up these needless restrictions was his guardian’s one idea of training, the two were naturally in frequent collision. Then came punishment upon punishment, until the boy became hardened beyond human belief, accepting a thrashing as part of the evils incident to life itself, and viewing his elders from a stand-point that Mrs. Voynich portrays in a convincing paragraph, which is also a good example of her handling of psychological details:

“Human beings, especially grown-up ones, had hitherto played in his conception of life a singularly small and contemptible part. They were inevitable, of course, and sometimes useful; but neither interesting nor pleasant, and generally much in the way. Within the last three years a new element had been creeping into his relation with the adults of his world; he had begun to see in them natural, as it were, hereditary enemies. Anything brutal or stupid, any petty meanness or fidgety interference on their part, seemed to him a matter of course, coming from creatures by nature illogical, spiteful, and incompetent; and, his stand-point having once become fixed, many wise and necessary restrictions were lumped together with the others in careless contempt. He never troubled himself about the reasons of a prohibition; if a thing was forbidden, it was presumably just because there was no sensible ground of objection to it.”

The stand-point was not original with Jack Raymond, of course, nor was it confined to his experience alone; most of us have made tin martyrs of ourselves in our own eyes at sometime or other in our lives, as succeeding generations will continue to do, so long as children are human beings, subject to their own imaginations and the vagaries of their elders.

Working upon such a temperament, the Vicar’s methods could not but produce distrust, resentment, and eventually hatred. For to his crass stupidity, the Vicar added an atavistic strain of cruelty that made him enjoy “to see something kick,” as Jack phrased it later. Acting according to his lights, he

flogged the boy, because he thought the boy's wickedness deserved it; but also because he enjoyed the infliction of pain.

So matters went on until one day a disgusting and totally untrue charge was made against the boy, and the uncle tortured him beyond endurance (the author mercifully omits details) in the effort to extort a confession. In trying to escape and commit suicide, Jack broke his arm, and the whole affair caused such a scandal that his uncle was forced to send him away to school. Here he became the champion of a little foreign chap with a talent for music, and his protector from a particularly objectionable form of school-danger. In his acquaintance with the boy's mother, who practically adopted him, he found his first true friendship; and from this point proceeded the normal development of the strong and useful manhood that underlay his character.

The tale as a whole is singularly strong and convincing, and Mrs. Voynich's ability in character drawing is exemplified by the skill with which she has kept her dramatis personæ true to themselves in word and deed. Despite the somewhat repellant outlines of the early portion of the tale, the book is in no way unpleasant, even considered merely as a tale, while as a piece of psychological analysis it is beyond commendation. It behooves us to think well if there be not in the world many such as Jack Raymond. From the Lippincott Press.

Mrs. Voynich will be remembered by the book-loving and theatre-going public as the author of "The Gadfly," that keen satire, which was so phenomenally successful, ninety thousand copies having been sold in the United States alone,—a success which "Jack Raymond"—on its merits alone—should duplicate.

That Sweet Enemy.
By Katharine Tynan.

The O'Doherty children were four,—Sir Phelim and Shawn, the boys, and Decima, who tells the story, and Sheila, the girls. Being orphans, they lived with Lady Theodosia Brereton, their devoted aunt. "The sharp tongue and the tender heart: that is Aunt Theodosia's way. She is like our hedge of sweetbriar, thorny and sweet." The hereditary hatred of the O'Doherties for the Dennistouns, who had dared to buy Castle Finn, the ancestral home of the O'Doherties, forms the basis of the tale; the main motive is found in Sheila's conversion from her detestation of everything that bore the stamp of Dennistoun: His Mark, and her ultimate marriage to Sir Giles, the head of the Dennistoun family. For the rest, it is a bright and enjoyable tale of gentle life in the Ireland of to-day. The current issue of Lippincott's *Select Novels*, the book is to be had in cloth and paper bindings.

A Short Manual of Inorganic Chemistry.
By A. Dupré and H. Wilson Hake. Third Edition.

In revising their volume, the authors have found it necessary to rewrite it, to a large extent; and the book as now presented (through J. B. Lippincott Company), while retaining the main features of the preceding editions, has nevertheless undergone some very material alterations. The universal recognition of the truth of the Periodic Law, for instance, has entailed the rewriting of no inconsiderable portion of the book; and the growing importance of Physical Chemistry, and especially of Thermo-chemistry, has necessitated a thorough revision of this portion of the work also, with such additions as seemed essential to a full presentation of the subject.

But the plan of the work remains unchanged,—an introductory portion, which deals with the general principles of the subject, precedes the descriptive portion as a preparation for the more specialized treatment of the various elements in subsequent pages. The authors have done wisely, as we think, in so arranging their work, which thus becomes accessible to uninitiated readers, as well as to those who have already a smattering of the science.



THE COSEY CORNER

By La Touche Hancock

A LITTLE cosey corner in a little cosey flat,
With scimitars and Turkish pipes and every kind of hat;
With pictures, guns of various sorts, and bric-a-brac galore,
And a multi-colored carpet upon a polished floor;
Electric lights, rose-colored lamps, and everything in trim
To please her spouse's oft-expressed and comfortable whim.

He wore a quiet smile of joy, as peacefully he sat
In the little cosey corner in the little cosey flat.

"Of course, you know, you mustn't smoke, for it would be too bad
To spoil the lovely curtains, which were brought from Hyderabad;
No drinking either. You won't mind, for you are sure to spill
Your B. and S. upon the floor. You won't? Oh, yes, you will!
And off the sofa you'll take care, I hope, to keep your shoes.
Now, darling, these are little things I'm sure you can't refuse."

He wore a sickly smile of joy, but you'll be sure at that
He "blessed" the cosey corner in the little cosey flat.



THE LOVE-LETTERS OF AN AMERICAN MAN

I.

HOTEL MARLBOROUGH,

April 11, 1900.

MY DEAREST: Up at five-forty this morning. Asked the Magnificent Night Clerk for mail. He said, "None till eight." Got a shave. Asked the M. N. C. again, time six o'clock. He said, "No mail for two hours." Read the paper and got breakfast. Met Talboys; he is the fellow I told you of. At seven-fifty-five I slipped away from him and asked M. N. C. for letters. This time he got mad. Finally, at eight-fifteen, received yours of yesterday, and now, at eight-forty-five, am answering it.

You're the dearest, sweetest, loveliest lady in the land, and when I get this Trust formed I'm coming home to tell you so.

Yours,

AMOS.

II.

April 12, 1900.

LOVING: I'm afraid I'm settled here for some few days more. Chester came up from Richmond. He's fearfully down on trusts, but Talboys and I are putting up a stiff jolly.

Walnuts and Wine

I'm glad you're going out a bit. Have all the fun you can. The flowers aren't anything; you know I love to send them.

Chester's a nice fellow. He knows your people. Talk him up to them and see if it goes.

It's almost midnight and I'm dead. Talked myself hoarse to-day, but Chester held off. Expect Dennis, of Dennis Harvey Company, to-morrow. Hope he'll have some effect on Chester.

Do you know how much I love you? O my love, my love, how did a gentle little lady like you pick up with a rough old fellow like me?

Always yours,

AMOS.

III.

April 13, 1900.

DEAREST: Fearfully upset at not hearing from you all day. Wonder if you're ill. Telegraph me if you are, or if you need me, and I'll drop all and go to you. You're first always.

Only time for these few lines. Dennis, Talboys, Chester, Plymton, and I meet in a few minutes for a fearful struggle. Iron *must* consolidate.

I love you, love you, love you. If I don't get a letter from you in the morning I'll wire you for news.

Yours,

AMOS.

*IV.

April 14, 1900.

SWEET: Glad to hear from you to-day. Sorry to learn your mother'd been ill. Glad she's better. Don't hesitate to use the horses.

Awful day yesterday; we talked iron all day. Chester stiff as the deuce. We must get him in or it all comes to nothing. He's sent for his partner, Carroll, so I'll have to wait till next week, I'm afraid.

Give my regrets to your mother, and don't work too hard taking care of her.

I'm so lonesome for you I don't know what to do. Glad you liked the ring. I saw it here and it reminded me of you, my pearl.

Your

AMOS.

V.

April 15, 1900.

MY GIRL: Iron still as hard as ever. Carroll due to-morrow, and I hope he'll make Chester come. It makes me ill to think of the inducements we've offered that fellow.

We haven't done much all day—much business, I mean. I slept all morning and certainly was disappointed not to hear from you this afternoon. Chester and I went out to look at the Western Foundry. I liked his way of looking at things, so after dinner I asked him to come down to my room for a smoke. I must be getting soft, I think, for presently I got on your people and then on you. It seems he knows you; he told me that you and he had had a summer together in the mountains. Somehow I showed him your picture, and I couldn't help seeing, dear girl, that he's been in love with you, and I can't help seeing that he loves you now. I've been envying him his good looks and youth and money and—well, I felt old and rough alongside of him, but now, now I've got

Mellin's Food



MR. J. E. PARRISH of Paris, Illinois, the father of this beautiful little girl, writes: "I send you a photograph of our little daughter, Jane Parrish; she is twenty-six months old and has been raised entirely upon Mellin's Food. She weighs thirty-six pounds and is in perfect health."

Mellin's Food babies are known everywhere as types of perfect childhood

If you will send us your name and address, we will gladly send you free of charge a sample of Mellin's Food.

MELLIN'S FOOD COMPANY, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

what he, with all that, couldn't get, why, I'm as happy and proud as a prince. He's a good fellow and I don't see why—but I suppose you had your reasons.

Let me hear from you regularly, dearie, or I'll come home.

Ever,

AMOS.

VI.

April 16, 1900—2 P.M.

DEARIE: I'm so tired I ache, but I can't let twenty-four hours pass without some message to my darling.

Still no word from you. How can you treat me so? I've read your last little note fifty times, I think.

Awful day with Talboys, Chester, and Carroll. We're succeeding, but it's hollow to me since I've had no word from you.

O my darling! I'm afraid I've been too happy.

Your loving

AMOS.

VII.

April 17, 1900—Noon.

MY DARLING: Your letter came just now, and I'm the happiest man in the world. When there was no letter in the morning mail I made up my mind I'd cut home if none came at noon.

Sorry your mother was so ill; had no idea it was so serious; but now that she has a nurse, you'll have time to write me every day, please, even if it's only a line.

Dearie, thank you for telling me about Chester. So you guessed he loved you, but he never told you. I wonder why! Well, I'm glad. You might have found him more attractive than me. There, I don't mean that, dearie.

Yesterday was a magnificent success, and now that I've heard from you, I can care about it. Chester's come in, and after a few busy days over detail I'll be home—Friday, I hope.

Talboys is waiting, so must stop. How happy I am, and all through you.

Ever your

AMOS.

VIII.

April 18, 1900.

DEAR LITTLE ONE: Day after to-morrow I'll be with you, dearest. Won't it be great? How the time drags! Spent all day talking over ways and means. Talboys is with me. Dennis and Plymton are crafty and think Chester and Carroll are getting too much; they talk of wanting to freeze out Chester and Carroll, but I can't see it; it won't be a go if we aren't all together. It's a big thing, dearie, and I'm proud of it, for it's all me.

Got you a souvenir of it. It's a stunner, and we'll call it your "Iron Consolidation tiara," you diamond beyond diamonds! And I'll be with you soon, dearie, and tell you for myself all I think of you.

I've been waiting for a letter all day, little one; you oughtn't to treat me so. I suppose you're working yourself to death over your mother. Can't the nurse do it all? I'm going to take care of you when I get back. Think of it, I'll be with you in forty-eight hours!

Always yours,

AMOS.

THE LIFTING OF A FINGER

BY
INA BREVOORT ROBERTS



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1901

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